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MEMOIRS

OF THE LIFE

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

John Gibson

BY

J. G. LOCKHART.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:
CAREY, LEA, & BLANCHARD.

1837.

19456.8

1875, March 22.
Walker Bequest.
(Vol. I., II.)

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

TO

JOHN BACON SAUREY MORRITT,

OF ROKEBY PARK, ESQ.,

THESE MEMOIRS OF HIS FRIEND

ARE RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

In obedience to the instructions of Sir Walter Scott's last will, I had made some progress in a narrative of his personal history, before there was discovered, in an old cabinet at Abbotsford, an autobiographical fragment, composed by him in 1808—shortly after the publication of his Marmion.

This fortunate accident rendered it necessary that I should altogether remodel the work which I had commenced. The first Chapter of the following Memoirs consists of the Ashestiel fragment; which gives a clear outline of his early life down to the period of his call to the bar —July, 1792. All the notes appended to this Chapter are also by himself. They are in a hand-writing very different from the text, and seem, from various circumstances, to have been added in 1826.

It appeared to me, however, that the author's modesty had prevented him from telling the story of his youth with that fulness of detail which would now satisfy the public. I have therefore recast my own collections as to the period in question, and presented the substance of them, in five succeeding chapters, as *illustrations* of his too brief autobiography. This procedure has been attended with many obvious enough disadvantages; but I greatly preferred it to printing the precious fragment in an Appendix.

I foresee that some readers will be apt to accuse me of trenching upon delicacy in certain details of the sixth and seventh chapters in this volume. Though the circumstances there treated of had no trivial influence on Sir Walter Scott's history and character, I should have been inclined, for many reasons, to omit them; but the choice was, in fact, not left to me,—for they had been mentioned, and misrepresented, in various preceding sketches of the Life which I had undertaken to illustrate. Such being the case, I considered it as my duty to tell the story truly and intelligibly: but I trust I have avoided any unnecessary disclosures: and, after all, there was nothing to disclose that could have attached any sort of blame to any of the parties concerned.

For the copious materials which the friends of Sir Walter have placed at my disposal, I feel just gratitude. Several of them are named in the course of the present volume; but I must take this opportunity of expressing my sense of the deep obligations under which I have been laid by the frank communications, in particular, of Willian Clerk, Esq., of Eldin,—John Irving, Esq., W. S.,—Sir Adam Ferguson,—James Skene, Esq., of Rubislaw,—Patrick Murray, Esq., of Simprim,—J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., of Rokeby,—William Wordsworth, Esq.,—Robert Southey, Esq., Poet Laureate,—Samuel Rogers, Esq.,—William Stewart Rose, Esq.,—Sir Alexander Wood,—the Right Hon. the Lord Chief Commissioner Adam,—the Right Hon. Sir William Rae, Bart.,—the late Right Hon. Sir William Knighton, Bart.,—the Right Hon. J. W. Croker,—Lord Jeffrey,—Sir Henry Halford, Bart., G. C. H.,—the late Major-General Sir John Malcolm, G.C.B.,—Sir Francis Chantrey, R. A.,—Sir David Wilkie, R. A.,—Thomas Thomson, Esq., P. C. S.,—Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq.—William Scott, of Raeburn, Esq.—John Scott, of Gala, Esq.,—Alexander Pringle, of Whytbank, Esq., M. P.,—John Swinton, of Kimmerghame, Esq.,—John Richardson, Esq., of Fludyer Street,—John Murray, Esq., of Albemarle Street,—Robert Bruce, Esq., Sheriff of Argyle,—Robert Ferguson, Esq., M. D.—G. P. R. James, Esq.,—William Laidlaw, Esq.,—Robert Cadell, Esq.,—John Elliot Shortreed, Esq.,—Allan Cunningham, Esq.,—Claud Russell, Esq.,—James Clarkson, Esq., of Melrose,—the late James Ballantyne, Esq.,—Joseph Train, Esq.,—Adolphus Ross, Esq., M. D.,—William Allan, Esq., R. A.,—Charles Dumergue, Esq.,—Stephen Nicholson Barber, Esq.,—James Slade, Esq.,—Mrs. Joanna Baillie,—Mrs. George Ellis,—Mrs. Thomas Scott,—Mrs. Charles Carpenter,—Miss Russell of Ashestiel,—Mrs. Sarah Nicholson,—Mrs. Duncan, Mertoun-Manse,—the Right Hon. the Lady Polwarth,—and her sons, Henry, Master of Polwarth, the Hon. and Rev. William, and the Hon. Francis Scott.

I beg leave to acknowledge with equal thankfulness the courtesy of the Rev. Dr. Harwood, Thomas White, Esq., Mrs. Thomson, and the Rev. Richard Garnett, all of Lichfield, and the Rev. Thomas Henry White, of Glasgow, in forwarding to me Sir Walter Scott's early letters to Miss Seward: that of the Lord Seaford, in intrusting me with those addressed to his late cousin, George Ellis, Esq.: and the kind readiness with which whatever papers in their possession could be serviceable to my undertaking were supplied by the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, and the Lord Montagu,—the Countess-Duchess of Sutherland, and the Lord Francis Egerton,—the Lord Viscount Sidmouth,—the Lord Bishop of Llandaff,—the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart.,—the Lady Louisa Stuart,—the Hon. Mrs. Warrender, and the Hon. Catherine Ardens,—Lady Davy,—Miss Edgeworth,—Mrs. Maclean Clephane, of Torloisk,—Mrs. Hughes, of Uffington,—Mrs. Charles Richardson,—Mrs. Bartley;—Sir George Mackenzie of Coul, Bart.,—the late Sir Francis Freeling, Bart.,—Capt. Sir Hugh Pigott, R. N.,—the late Sir William Gell,—Sir Cuthbert Sharp,—the Very Rev. Principal Baird,—the Rev. William Steven, of Rotterdam,—the late Rev. James Mitchell, of Wooler,—Robert William Hay, Esq., lately Under Secretary of State for the Colonial Department,—John Borthwick, of Crookstone, Esq.,—John Cay, Esq., Sheriff of Linlithgow,—Captain Basil Hall, R. N.,—Thomas Crofton Croker, Esq.,—Henry Cheney, Esq.,—Alexander Young, Esq., of Harburn,—A. J. Valpy, Esq.,—James Maidment, Esq., Advocate,—the late Donald Gregory, Esq.,—Robert Johnston, Esq., of Edinburgh,—J. J. Masquerier, Esq., of Brighton,—Owen Rees, Esq., of Paternoster Row,—William Miller, Esq., formerly of Albemarle Street,—David Laing, Esq., of Edinburgh,—and John Smith the Youngest, Esq., of Glasgow.

J. G. LOCKHART.

London, *December* 20, 1836.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

CHAPTER I.

MEMOIR OF THE EARLY LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Ashestiel, April 26th, 1808.

The present age has discovered a desire, or rather a rage, for literary anecdote and private history, that may be well permitted to alarm one who has engaged to a certain degree the attention of the public. That I have had more than my own share of popularity, my contemporaries will be as ready to admit, as I am to confess that its measure has exceeded not only my hopes, but my merits, and even wishes. I may be therefore permitted, without an extraordinary degree of vanity, to take the precaution of recording a few leading circumstances (they do not merit the name of events) of a very quiet and uniform life—that, should my literary reputation survive my temporal existence, the public may know from good authority all that they are entitled to know of an individual who has contributed to their amusement.

From the lives of some poets a most important moral lesson may doubtless be derived, and few sermons can be read with so much profit as the Memoirs of Burns, of Chatterton, or of Savage. Were I conscious of any thing peculiar in my own moral character which could render such developement necessary or useful, I would as readily consent to it as I would bequeath my body to dissection, if the operation could tend to point out the nature and the means of curing any peculiar malady. But as my habits of thinking and acting, as well as my rank in society, were fixed long before I had attained, or even pretended to, any poetical reputation,* and as it produced, when acquired, no remarkable change upon either, it is hardly to be expected that much information can be derived from minutely investigating frailties, follies, or vices, not very different in number or degree from those of other men in my situation. As I have not been blessed with the talents of Burns or Chatterton, I have been happily exempted from the influence of their violent passions, exasperated by the struggle of feelings which rose up against the unjust decrees of fortune. Yet, although I cannot tell of difficulties vanquished, and distance of rank annihilated by the strength of genius, those who shall hereafter read this little Memoir may find in it some hints to be improved, for the regulation of their own minds, or the training those of others.

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* I do not mean to say that my success in literature has not led me to mix familiarly in society much above my birth and original pretensions, since I have been readily received in the first circles in Britain. But there is a certain intuitive knowledge of the world to which most well-educated Scotchmen are early trained, that prevents them from being much dazzled by this species of elevation. A man who to good-nature adds the general rudiments of good-breeding, provided he rest contented with a simple and unaffected manner of behaving and expressing himself, will never be ridiculous in the best society, and, so far as his talents and information permit, may be an agreeable part of the company. I have therefore never felt much elevated, nor did I experience any violent change in situation, by the passport which my poetical character afforded me into higher company than my birth warranted.—[1826].

Every Scottishman has a pedigree. It is a national prerogative as unalienable as his pride and his poverty. My birth was neither distinguished nor sordid. According to the prejudices of my country, it was esteemed *gentle*, as I was connected, though remotely, with ancient families both by my father's and mother's side. My father's grandfather was Walter Scott, well known in Teviotdale by the surname of *Beardie*. He was the second son of Walter Scott, first Laird of Raeburn, who was third son of Sir William Scott, and the grandson of Walter Scott, commonly called in tradition *Auld Watt*, of Harden. I am therefore lineally descended from that ancient chieftain, whose name I have made to ring in many a ditty, and from his fair dame, the Flower of Yarrow—no bad genealogy for a Border minstrel. *Beardie*, my great-grandfather aforesaid, derived his cognomen from a venerable beard, which he wore unblemished by razor or scissors, in token of his regret for the banished dynasty of Stewart. It would have been well that his zeal had stopped there. But he took arms, and intrigued in their cause, until he lost all he had in the world, and, as I have heard, ran a narrow risk of being hanged, had it not been for the interference of Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth. Beardie's elder brother, William Scott of Raeburn, my great-granduncle, was killed about the age of twenty-one, in a duel with Pringle of Crichton, grandfather of the present Mark Pringle of Clifton. They fought with swords, as was the fashion of the time, in a field near Selkirk, called from the catastrophe the *Raeburn Meadow-spot*. Pringle fled from Scotland to Spain, and was long a captive and slave in Barbary. *Beardie* became, of course, *Tutor of Raeburn*, as the old Scottish phrase called him, that is, guardian to his infant nephew, father of the present Walter Scott of Raeburn. He also managed the estates of Makerstoun, being nearly related to that family by his mother, Barbara MacDougal. I suppose he had some allowance for his care in either case, and subsisted upon that and the fortune which he had by his wife, a Miss Campbell of Silvercraigs, in the west, through which connexion my father used to *call cousin*, as they say, with the Campbells of Blythswood. Beardie was a man of some learning, and a friend of Dr. Pitcairn, to whom his politics probably made him acceptable. They had a Tory or Jacobite club in Edinburgh, in which the conversation is said to have been maintained in Latin. Old Beardie died in a house, still standing, at the north-east entrance to the Churchyard of Kelso, about . . . .

He left three sons. The eldest, Walter, had a family, of which any that now remain have been long settled in America:—the male heirs are long since extinct. The third was William, father of James Scott, well known in India as one of the original settlers of Prince of Wales's island:—he had, besides, a numerous family both of sons and daughters, and died at Lasswade, in Mid-Lothian, about....

The second, Robert Scott, was my grandfather. He was originally bred to the sea; but, being shipwrecked near Dundee in his trial voyage, he took such a sincere dislike to that element, that he could not be persuaded to a second attempt. This occasioned a quarrel between him and his father, who left him to shift for himself. Robert was one of those active spirits to whom this was no misfortune. He turned Whig upon the spot, and fairly abjured his father's politics, and his learned poverty. His chief and relative, Mr. Scott of Harden, gave him a lease of the farm of Sandy-Knowe, comprehending the rocks in the centre of which Smailholm or Sandy-Knowe Tower is situated. He took for his shepherd an old man, called Hogg, who willingly lent him, out of respect to his family, his whole savings, about £30, to stock the new farm. With this sum, which it seems was at the time sufficient for the purpose, the master and servant set off to purchase a stock of sheep at Whitsun-Tryste, a fair held on a hill near Wooler in Northumberland. The old shepherd went carefully from drove to drove, till he found a *hirsel* likely to answer their purpose, and then returned to tell his master to come up and conclude the bargain. But what was his surprise to see him galloping a mettled hunter about the race-course, and to find he had expended the whole stock in this extraordinary purchase!—Moses's bargain of green spectacles did not strike more dismay into the Vicar of Wakefield's family than my grandfather's rashness into the poor old shepherd. The thing, however, was irretrievable, and they returned without the sheep. In the course of a few days, however, my grandfather, who was one of the best horsemen of his time, attended John Scott of Harden's hounds on this same horse, and displayed him to such advantage that he sold him for double the original price. The farm was now stocked in earnest; and the rest of my grandfather's career was that of successful industry. He was one of the first who were active in the cattle trade, afterwards carried to such extent between the Highlands of Scotland and the leading counties in England, and by his droving transactions acquired a considerable sum of money. He was a man of middle stature, extremely active, quick, keen, and fiery in his temper, stubbornly honest, and so distinguished for his skill in country matters, that he was the general referee in all points of dispute which occurred in the neighbourhood. His birth being admitted as *gentle*, gave him access to the best society in the county, and his dexterity in country sports, particularly hunting, made him an acceptable companion in the field as well as at the table.*

Robert Scott of Sandy-Knowe, married, in 1728, Barbara Haliburton, daughter of Thomas Haliburton of Newmains, an ancient and respectable family in Berwickshire. Among other patrimonial possessions, they enjoyed the part of Dryburgh, now the property of the Earl of Buchan, comprehending the ruins of the Abbey. My granduncle, Robert Haliburton, having no male heirs, this estate, as well as the representation of the family, would have devolved upon my father, and indeed Old Newmains had settled it upon him; but this was prevented by the misfortunes of my granduncle, a weak silly man, who engaged in trade, for which he had neither stock nor talents, and became bankrupt. The ancient patrimony was sold for a trifle, (about £3000), and my father, who might have purchased it with ease, was dissuaded by my grandfather, who at that time believed a more advantageous purchase might have been made of some lands which Raeburn thought of selling. And thus we have nothing left of Dryburgh, although my father's maternal inheritance, but the right of stretching our bones where mine may perhaps be laid ere any eye but my own glances over these pages.

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* The present Lord Haddington, and other gentlemen conversant with the south country, remember my grandfather well. He was a fine alert figure, and wore a jockey-cap over his grey hair.—[1826].

Walter Scott, my father, was born in 1729, and educated to the profession of a Writer to the Signet. He was the eldest of a large family, several of whom I shall have occasion to mention with a tribute of sincere gratitude. My father was a singular instance of a man rising to eminence in a profession for which nature had in some degree unfitted him. He had indeed a turn for labour, and a pleasure in analyzing the abstruse feudal doctrines connected with conveyancing, which would probably have rendered him unrivalled in the line of a special pleader, had there been such a profession in Scotland; but in the actual business of the profession which he embraced, in that sharp and intuitive perception which is necessary in driving bargains for himself and others, in availing himself of the wants, necessities, caprices, and follies of some, and guarding against the knavery and malice of others, uncle Toby himself could not have conducted himself with more simplicity than my father. Most attorneys have been suspected, more or less justly, of making their own fortune at the expense of their clients—my father's fate was to vindicate his calling from the stain in one instance, for in many cases his clients contrived to ease him of considerable sums. Many worshipful and be-knighted names occur to my memory, who did him the honour to run in his debt to the amount of thousands, and to pay him with a lawsuit, or a commission of bankruptcy, as the case happened. But they are gone to a different accounting, and it would be ungenerous to visit their disgrace upon their descendants. My father was wont also to give openings, to those who were pleased to take them, to pick a quarrel with him. He had a zeal for his clients which was almost ludicrous: far from coldly discharging the duties of his employment towards them, he thought for them, felt for their honour as for his own, and rather risked disobliging them than neglecting any thing to which he conceived their duty bound them. If there was an old mother or aunt to be maintained, he was, I am afraid, too apt to administer to their necessities from what the young heir had destined exclusively to his pleasures. This ready discharge of obligations, which the Civilians tell us are only natural and not legal, did not, I fear, recommend him to his employers. Yet his practice was, at one period of his life, very extensive. He understood his business theoretically, and was early introduced to it by a partnership with George Chalmers, Writer to the Signet, under whom he had served his apprenticeship.

His person and face were uncommonly handsome, with an expression of sweetness of temper, which was not fallacious; his manners were rather formal, but full of genuine kindness, especially when exercising the duties of hospitality. His general habits were not only temperate, but severely abstemious; but upon a festival occasion, there were few whom a moderate glass of wine exhilarated to such a lively degree. His religion, in which he was devoutly sincere, was Calvinism of the strictest kind, and his favourite study related to church history. I suspect the good old man was often engaged with Knox and Spottiswoode's folios, when, immured in his solitary room, he was supposed to be immersed in professional researches. In his political principles he was a steady friend to freedom, with a bias, however, to the monarchical part of our constitution, which he considered as peculiarly exposed to danger during the later years of his life. He had much of ancient Scottish prejudice respecting the forms of marriages, funerals, christenings, and so forth, and was always vexed at any neglect of etiquette upon such occasions. As his education had not been upon an enlarged plan, it could not be expected that he should be an enlightened scholar, but he had not passed through a busy life without observation; and his remarks upon times and manners often exhibited strong traits of practical though untaught philosophy. Let me conclude this sketch, which I am unconscious of having overcharged, with a few lines written by the late Mrs. Cockburn* upon the subject. They made one among a set of poetical characters which were given as toasts among a few friends, and we must hold them to contain a striking likeness, since the original was recognised so soon as they were read aloud.

> "To a thing that's uncommon—
> A youth of discretion,
> Who, though vastly handsome,
> Despises flirtation:
> To the friend in affliction,
> The heart of affection,
> Who may hear the last trump
> Without dread of detection."

In [April, 1758] my father married Anne Rutherford, eldest daughter of Dr. John Rutherford, professor of medicine in the University of Edinburgh. He was one of those pupils of Boerhaave to whom the school of medicine in our northern metropolis owes its rise, and a man distinguished for professional talent, for lively wit, and for literary acquirements. Dr. Rutherford was twice married. His first wife, of whom my mother is the sole surviving child, was a daughter of Sir John Swinton of Swinton, a family which produced many distinguished warriors during the middle ages, and which, for antiquity and honourable alliances, may rank with any in Britain. My grandfather's second wife was Miss Mackay, by whom he had a second family, of whom are now (1808) alive, Dr. Daniel Rutherford, professor of botany in the University of Edinburgh, and Misses Janet and Christian Rutherford, amiable and accomplished women.

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* Mrs. Cockburn (born Miss Rutherford of Fairnalie) was the authoress of the beautiful song—

> "I have seen the smiling
> Of fortune beguiling."—[1826].

My father and mother had a very numerous family, no fewer, I believe, than twelve children, of whom many were highly promising, though only five survived very early youth. My eldest brother (that is, the eldest whom I remember to have seen) was Robert Scott, so called after my uncle, of whom I shall have much to say hereafter. He was bred in the King's service, under Admiral, then Captain William Dickson, and was in most of Rodney's battles. His temper was bold and haughty, and to me was often checkered with what I felt to be capricious tyranny. In other respects I loved him much, for he had a strong turn for literature, read poetry with taste and judgment, and composed verses himself which had gained him great applause among his messmates. Witness the following elegy upon the supposed loss of the vessel, composed the night before Rodney's celebrated battle of April the 12th, 1782. It alludes to the various amusements of his mess.—

"No more the geese shall cackle on the poop,
  No more the bagpipe through the orlop sound,
No more the midshipmen, a jovial group,
  Shall toast the girls, and push the bottle round.
In death's dark road at anchor fast they stay,
  Till Heaven's loud signal shall in thunder roar,
Then starting up, all hands shall quick obey,
  Sheet home the topsail, and with speed unmoor."

Robert sung agreeably—(a virtue which was never seen in me)—understood the mechanical arts, and when in good humour, could regale us with many a tale of bold adventure and narrow escapes. When in bad humour, however, he gave us a practical taste of what was then man-of-war's discipline, and kicked and cuffed without mercy. I have often thought how he might have distinguished himself had he continued in the navy until the present times, so glorious for nautical exploit. But the peace of Paris cut off all hopes of promotion for those who had not great interest; and some disgust, which his proud spirit had taken at harsh usage from a superior officer, combined to throw poor Robert into the East India Company's service, for which his habits were ill adapted. He made two voyages to the East, and died a victim to the climate in . . .

John Scott, my second brother, is about three years older than me. He addicted himself to the military service, and is now brevet-major in the 73d regiment.*

I had an only sister, Anne Scott, who seemed to be from her cradle the butt for mischance to shoot arrows at. Her childhood was marked by perilous escapes from the most extraordinary accidents. Among others, I remember an iron-railed door, leading into the area in the centre of George's Square, being closed by the wind, whilst her fingers were betwixt the hasp and staple. Her hand was thus locked in, and must have been smashed to pieces, had not the bones of her fingers been remarkably slight and thin. As it was, the hand was cruelly mangled. On another occasion she was nearly drowned in a pond, or old quarry-hole, in what was then called Brown's Park, on the south side of the square. But the most unfortunate accident, and which, though it happened while she was only six years old, proved the remote cause of her death, was her cap accidentally taking fire. The child was alone in the room, and before assistance could be obtained, her head was dreadfully scorched. After a lingering and dangerous illness, she recovered—but never to enjoy perfect health. The slightest cold occasioned swellings in her face, and other indications of a delicate constitution. At length, in [1801], poor Anne was taken ill, and died after a very short interval. Her temper, like that of her brothers, was peculiar, and in her, perhaps, it showed more odd, from the habits of indulgence which her nervous illnesses had formed. But she was at heart an affectionate and kind girl, neither void of talent nor of feeling, though living in an ideal world which she had framed to herself by the force of imagination. Anne was my junior by about a year.

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* He was this year made major of the second battalion, by the kind intercession of M Canning at the War-Office—1809.—He retired from the army, and kept house with mother. His health was totally broken, and he died, yet a young man, on 8th of M 1816.—[1826].

A year lower in the list was my brother Thomas Scott, who is still alive.*

Last, and most unfortunate of our family, was my youngest brother Daniel. With the same aversion to labour, or rather, I should say, the same determined indolence that marked us all, he had neither the vivacity of intellect which supplies the want of diligence, nor the pride which renders the most detested labour better than dependence or contempt. His career was as unfortunate as might be augured from such an unhappy combination, and after various unsuccessful attempts to establish himself in life, he died on his return from the West Indies, in [July 1806].

Having premised so much of my family, I return to my own story. I was born, as I believe, on the 15th August, 1771, in a house belonging to my father, at the head of the College Wynd. It was pulled down, with others, to make room for the northern front of the new College. I was an uncommonly healthy child, but had nearly died in consequence of my first nurse being ill of a consumption, a circumstance which she chose to conceal, though to do so was murder to both herself and me. She went privately to consult Dr. Black, the celebrated professor of chemistry, who put my father on his guard. The woman was dismissed, and I was consigned to a healthy peasant, who is still alive to boast of her *laddie* being what she calls *a grand gentleman*.† I showed every sign of health and strength until I was about eighteen months old. One night, I have been often told, I showed great reluctance to be caught and put to bed, and after being chased about the room, was apprehended and consigned to my dormitory with some difficulty. It was the last time I was to show such personal agility. In the morning I was discovered to be affected with the fever which often accompanies the cutting of large teeth. It held me three days. On the fourth, when they went to bathe me as usual, they discovered that I had lost the power of my right leg. My grandfather, an excellent anatomist as well as physician, the late worthy Alexander Wood, and many others of the most respectable of the faculty, were consulted. There appeared to be no dislocation or sprain; blisters and other topical remedies were applied in vain. When the efforts of regular physicians had been exhausted, without the slightest success, my anxious parents, during the course of many years, eagerly grasped at every prospect of cure which was held out by the promise of empirics, or of ancient ladies or gentlemen who conceived themselves entitled to recommend various remedies, some of which were of a nature sufficiently singular. But the advice of my grandfather, Dr. Rutherford, that I should be sent to reside in the country, to give the chance of natural exertion, excited by free air and liberty, was first resorted to, and before I have the recollection of the slightest event, I was, agreeably to this friendly counsel, an inmate in the farm-house of Sandy-Knowe.

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* Poor Tom, a man of infinite humour and excellent parts, pursued for some time my father's profession; but he was unfortunate, from engaging in speculations respecting farms and matters out of the line of his proper business. He afterwards became paymaster of the 70th regiment, and died in Canada. Tom married Elizabeth, a daughter of the family of M'Culloch of Ardwell, an ancient Galwegian stock, by whom he left a son, Walter Scott, now second lieutenant of engineers in the East India Company's service, Bombay, and three daughters—Jessie, married to Lieutenant-Colonel Huxley; 2, Anne; 3, Eliza—the two last still unmarried.—[1826].

† She died in 1810.—[1826].

An odd incident is worth recording. It seems my mother had sent a maid to take charge of me, that I might be no inconvenience in the family. But the damsel sent on that important mission had left her heart behind her, in the keeping of some wild fellow, it is likely, who had done and said more to her than he was like to make good. She became extremely desirous to return to Edinburgh, and as my mother made a point of her remaining where she was, she contracted a sort of hatred at poor me, as the cause of her being detained at Sandy-Knowe. This rose, I suppose, to a sort of delirious affection, for she confessed to old Alison Wilson, the housekeeper, that she had carried me up to the Craigs, meaning, under a strong temptation of the Devil, to cut my throat with her scissors, and bury me in the moss. Alison instantly took possession of my person, and took care that her confidant should not be subject to any farther temptation, so far as I was concerned. She was dismissed, of course, and I have heard became afterwards a lunatic.

It is here at Sandy-Knowe, in the residence of my paternal grandfather, already mentioned, that I have the first consciousness of existence; and I recollect distinctly that my situation and appearance were a little whimsical. Among the odd remedies recurred to to aid my lameness, some one had recommended that so often as a sheep was killed for the use of the family, I should be stripped, and swathed up in the skin warm as it was flayed from the carcass of the animal. In this Tartar-like habiliment I well remember lying upon the floor of the little parlour in the farm-house, while my grandfather, a venerable old man with white hair, used every excitement to make me try to crawl. I also distinctly remember the late Sir George MacDougal of Makerstoun, father of the present Sir Henry Hay MacDougal, joining in this kindly attempt. He was, God knows how,* a relation of ours, and I still recollect him in his old-fashioned military habit (he had been colonel of the Greys), with a small cocked hat, deeply laced, an embroidered scarlet waistcoat, and a light-coloured coat, with milk-white locks tied in a military fashion, kneeling on the ground before me, and dragging his watch along the carpet to induce me to follow it. The benevolent old soldier and the infant wrapped in his sheepskin would have afforded an odd group to uninterested spectators. This must have happened about my third year, for Sir George MacDougal and my grandfather both died shortly after that period.

My grandmother continued for some years to take charge of the farm, assisted by my father's second brother, Mr. Thomas Scott, who resided at Crailing, as factor or land-steward for Mr. Scott of Danesfield, then proprietor of that estate.† This was during the heat of the American war, and I remember being as anxious on my uncle's weekly visits (for we heard news at no other time) to hear of the defeat of Washington, as if I had had some deep and personal cause of antipathy to him. I know not how this was combined with a very strong prejudice in favour of the Stuart family, which I had originally imbibed from the songs and tales of the Jacobites. This latter political propensity was deeply confirmed by the stories told in my hearing of the cruelties exercised in the executions at Carlisle, and in the Highlands, after the battle of Culloden. One or two of our own distant relations had fallen on that occasion, and I remember detesting the name of Cumberland with more than infant hatred. Mr. Curle, farmer at Yetbyre, husband of one of my aunts, had been present at their execution; and it was probably from him that I first heard these tragic tales which made so great an impression on me. The local information, which I conceive had some share in forming my future taste and pursuits, I derived from the old songs and tales which then formed the amusement of a retired country family. My grandmother, in whose youth the old Border depredations were matter of recent tradition, used to tell me many a tale of Watt of Harden, Wight Willie of Aikwood, Jamie Tellfer of the fair Dodhead, and other heroes—merrymen all of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John. A more recent hero, but not of less note, was the celebrated *Diel of Littledean*, whom she well remembered, as he had married her mother's sister. Of this extraordinary person I learned many a story, grave and gay, comic and warlike. Two or three old books which lay in the window-seat were explored for my amusement in the tedious winter days. Automathes and Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany were my favourites, although at a later period an odd volume of Josephus's Wars of the Jews divided my partiality.

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* He was a second cousin of my grandfather's. Isabel MacDougal, wife of Walter, the first Laird of Raeburn, and mother of Walter Scott, called Beardie, was grand-aunt, I take it, to the late Sir George MacDougal. There was always great friendship between us and the Makerston family. It singularly happened that at the burial of the late Sir Henry MacDougal, my cousin William Scott younger of Raeburn, and I myself were the nearest blood-relations present, although our connexion was of so old a date, and ranked as pall-bearers accordingly.—[1826].

† My uncle afterwards resided at Elliston, and then took from Mr. Cornelius Elliot the estate of Woollee. Finally, he retired to Monklaw, in the neighbourhood of Jedburgh, where he died, 1823, at the advanced age of ninety years, and in full possession of his faculties. It was a fine thing to hear him talk over the change of the country which he had witnessed.—[1826].

My kind and affectionate aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose memory will ever be dear to me, used to read these works to me with admirable patience, until I could repeat long passages by heart. The ballad of Hardyknute I was early master of, to the great annoyance of almost our only visiter, the worthy clergyman of the parish, Dr. Duncan, who had not patience to have a sober chat interrupted by my shouting forth this ditty. Methinks I now see his tall thin emaciated figure, his legs cased in clasped gambadoes, and his face of a length that would have rivalled the Knight of La Mancha's, and hear him exclaiming, "One may as well speak in the mouth of a cannon as where that child is." With this little acidity, which was natural to him, he was a most excellent and benevolent man, a gentleman in every feeling, and altogether different from those of his order who cringe at the tables of the gentry, or domineer and riot at those of the yeomanry. In his youth he had been chaplain in the family of Lord Marchmont—had seen Pope—and could talk familiarly of many characters who had survived the Augustan age of Queen Anne. Though valetudinary, he lived to be nearly ninety, and to welcome to Scotland his son, Colonel William Duncan, who, with the highest character for military and civil merit, had made a considerable fortune in India. In [1795], a few days before his death, I paid him a visit, to inquire after his health. I found him emaciated to the last degree, wrapped in a tartan night-gown, and employed with all the activity of health and youth in correcting a history of the Revolution, which he intended should be given to the public when he was no more. He read me several passages with a voice naturally strong, and which the feelings of an author then raised above the depression of age and declining health. I begged him to spare this fatigue, which could not but injure his health. His answer was remarkable. "I know," he said, "that I cannot survive a fortnight—and what signifies an exertion that can at worst only accelerate my death a few days?" I marvelled at the composure of this reply, for his appearance sufficiently vouched the truth of his prophecy, and rode home to my uncle's (then my abode), musing what there could be in the spirit of authorship that could inspire its votaries with the courage of martyrs. He died within less than the period he assigned—with which event I close my digression.

I was in my fourth year when my father was advised that the Bath waters might be of some advantage to my lameness. My affectionate aunt, although such a journey promised to a person of her retired habits any thing but pleasure or amusement, undertook as readily to accompany me to the wells of Bladud, as if she had expected all the delight that ever the prospect of a watering-place held out to its most impatient visitants. My health was by this time a good deal confirmed by the country air, and the influence of that imperceptible and unfatiguing exercise to which the good sense of my grandfather had subjected me; for when the day was fine, I was usually carried out and laid down beside the old shepherd, among the crags or rocks round which he fed his sheep. The impatience of a child soon inclined me to struggle with my infirmity, and I began by degrees to stand, to walk, and to run. Although the limb affected was much shrunk and contracted, my general health, which was of more importance, was much strengthened by being frequently in the open air, and, in a word, I who in a city had probably been condemned to helpless and hopeless decrepitude, was now a healthy, high-spirited, and, my lameness apart, a sturdy child—*non sine diis animosus infans.*

We went to London by sea, and it may gratify the curiosity of minute biographers to learn, that our voyage was performed in the Duchess of Buccleuch, Captain Beatson, master. At London we made a short stay, and saw some of the common shows exhibited to strangers. When, twenty-five years afterwards, I visited the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey, I was astonished to find how accurate my recollections of these celebrated places of visitation proved to be, and I have ever since trusted more implicitly to my juvenile reminiscences. At Bath, where I lived about a year, I went through all the usual discipline of the pump-room and baths, but I believe without the least advantage to my lameness. During my residence at Bath, I acquired the rudiments of reading at a day-school, kept by an old dame near our lodgings, and I had never a more regular teacher, although I think I did not attend her a quarter of a year. Afterwards, when grown a big boy, I had a few lessons from Mr. Stalker of Edinburgh, and finally from the Rev. Mr. Clure. But I never acquired a just pronunciation, nor could I read with much propriety.

In other respects my residence at Bath is marked by very pleasing recollections. The venerable John Home, author of Douglas, was then at the watering-place, and paid much attention to my aunt and to me. His wife, who has survived him, was then an invalid, and used to take the air in her carriage on the Downs, when I was often invited to accompany her. But the most delightful recollections of Bath are dated after the arrival of my uncle, Captain Robert Scott, who introduced me to all the little amusements which suited my age, and, above all, to the theatre. The play was As You Like It; and the witchery of the whole scene is alive in my mind at this moment. I made, I believe, noise more than enough, and remember being so much scandalized at the quarrel between Orlando and his brother in the first scene, that I screamed out, "A'n't they brothers?" A few weeks' residence at home convinced me, who had till then been an only child in the house of my grandfather, that a quarrel between brothers was a very natural event.

The other circumstances I recollect of my residence in Bath are but trifling, yet I never recall them without a feeling of pleasure. The beauties of the parade (which of them I know not), with the river Avon winding around it, and the lowing of the cattle from the opposite hills, are warm in my recollection, and are only rivalled by the splendours of a toy-shop somewhere near the Orange Grove. I had acquired, I know not by what means, a kind of superstitious terror for statuary of all kinds. No ancient Iconoclast or modern Calvinist could have looked on the outside of the abbey church (if I mistake not, the principal church at Bath is so called) with more horror than the image of Jacob's Ladder, with all its angels, presented to my infant eye. My uncle effectually combated my terrors, and formally introduced me to a statue of Neptune, which perhaps still keeps guard at the side of the Avon, where a pleasure-boat crosses to Spring Gardens.

After being a year at Bath, I returned first to Edinburgh, and afterwards for a season to Sandy-Knowe;—and thus the time whiled away till about my eighth year, when it was thought sea-bathing might be of service to my lameness.

For this purpose, still under my aunt's protection, I remained some weeks at Prestonpans, a circumstance not worth mentioning, excepting to record my juvenile intimacy with an old military veteran, Dalgetty by name, who had pitched his tent in that little village, after all his campaigns subsisting on an ensign's half-pay, though called by courtesy a Captain. As this old gentleman, who had been in all the German wars, found very few to listen to his tales of military feats, he formed a sort of alliance with me, and I used invariably to attend him for the pleasure of hearing those communications. Sometimes our conversation turned on the American war, which was then raging. It was about the time of Burgoyne's unfortunate expedition, to which my Captain and I augured different conclusions. Somebody had showed me a map of North America, and, struck with the rugged appearance of the country, and the quantity of lakes, I expressed some doubts on the subject of the General's arriving safely at the end of his journey, which were very indignantly refuted by the Captain. The news of the Saratoga disaster, while it gave me a little triumph, rather shook my intimacy with the veteran.*

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* Besides this veteran, I found another ally at Prestonpans, in the person of George Constable, an old friend of my father's, educated to the law, but retired upon his independent property, and generally residing near Dundee. He had many of those peculiarities of temper which long afterwards I tried to develope in the character of Jonathan Oldbuck. It is very odd, that though I am unconscious of any thing in which I strictly copied the *manners* of my old friend, the resemblance was nevertheless detected by George Chalmers, Esq., solicitor, London, an old friend, both of my father and Mr. Constable, and who affirmed to my late friend, Lord Kinedder, that I must needs be the author of the Antiquary, since he recognised the portrait of George Constable. But my friend George was not so decided an enemy to womankind as his representative Monkbarns. On the contrary, I rather suspect that he had a *tendresse* for my Aunt Jenny, who even then was a most beautiful woman, though somewhat advanced in life. To the close of her life, she had the finest eyes and teeth I ever saw, and though she could be sufficiently sharp when she had a mind, her general behaviour was genteel and ladylike. However this might be, I derived a great deal of curious information from George Constable, both at this early period, and afterwards. He was constantly philandering about my aunt, and of course very kind to me. He was the first person who told me about Falstaff and Hotspur, and other characters in Shakspeare. What idea I annexed to them I know not, but I must have annexed some, for I remember quite well being interested on the subject. Indeed, I rather suspect that children derive impulses of a powerful and important kind in hearing things which they cannot entirely comprehend; and therefore, that to write *down* to children's understanding is a mistake; set them on the scent, and let them puzzle it out. To return to George Constable, I knew him well at a much later period. He used always to dine at my father's house of a Sunday, and was authorized to turn the conversation out of the austere and Calvinistic tone, which it usually maintained on that day, upon subjects of history or auld langsyne. He remembered the forty-five, and told many excellent stories, all with a strong dash of a peculiar caustic humour.

George's sworn ally as a brother antiquary was John Davidson, then Keeper of the Signet; and I remember his flattering and compelling me to go to dine there. A writer's apprentice with the Keeper of the Signet, whose least officer kept us in order!—It was an awful event. Thither, however, I went with some secret expectation of a scantling of good claret. Mr. D. had a son whose taste inclined him to the army, to which his father, From Prestonpans I was transported back to my father's house in George's Square, which continued to be my most established place of residence, until my marriage in 1797. I felt the change from being a single indulged brat, to becoming a member of a large family, very severely; for under the gentle government of my kind grandmother, who was meekness itself, and of my aunt, who, though of an higher temper, was exceedingly attached to me, I had acquired a degree of license which could not be permitted in a large family. I had sense enough, however, to bend my temper to my new circumstances; but such was the agony which I internally experienced, that I have guarded against nothing more in the education of my own family, than against their acquiring habits of self-willed caprice and domination. I found much consolation during this period of mortification in the partiality of my mother. She joined to a light and happy temper of mind a strong turn to study poetry and works of imagination. She was sincerely devout, but her religion was, as became her sex, of a cast less austere than my father's. Still, the discipline of the Presbyterian Sabbath was severely strict, and I think injudiciously so. Although Bunyan's Pilgrim, Gesner's Death of Abel, Rowe's Letters, and one or two other books, which, for that reason, I still have a favour for, were admitted to relieve the gloom of one dull sermon succeeding to another—there was far too much tedium annexed to the duties of the day; and in the end it did none of us any good.

My week-day tasks were more agreeable. My lameness and my solitary habits had made me a tolerable reader, and my hours of leisure were usually spent in reading aloud to my mother Pope's translation of Homer, which, excepting a few traditionary ballads, and the songs in Allen Ramsay's Evergreen, was the first poetry which I perused. My mother had good natural taste and great feeling: she used to make me pause upon those passages which expressed generous and worthy sentiments, and if she could not divert me from those which were descriptive of battle and tumult, she contrived at least to divide my attention between them. My own enthusiasm, however, was chiefly awakened by the wonderful and the terrible—the common taste of children, but in which I have remained a child even unto this day. I got by heart, not as a task, but almost without intending it, the passages with which I was most pleased, and used to recite them aloud, both when alone and to others—more willingly, however, in my hours of solitude, for I had observed some auditors smile, and I dreaded ridicule at that time of life more than I have ever done since.

In [1779] I was sent to the second class of the Grammar School, or High School of Edinburgh, then taught by Mr. Luke Fraser, a

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who had designed him for the bar, gave a most unwilling consent. He was at this time a young officer, and he and I, leaving the two seniors to proceed in their chat as they pleased, never once opened our mouths either to them or each other. The Pragmatic Sanction happened unfortunately to become the theme of their conversation, when Constable said in jest, "Now, John, I'll wad you a plack that neither of these lads ever heard of the Pragmatic Sanction."—"Not heard of the Pragmatic Sanction!" said John Davidson; "I would like to see that;" and with a voice of thunder, he asked his son the fatal question. As young D. modestly allowed he knew nothing about it, his father drove him from the table in a rage, and I absconded during the confusion; nor could Constable ever bring me back again to his friend Davidson's. [1826].

good Latin scholar and a very worthy man. Though I had received, with my brothers, in private, lessons of Latin from Mr. James French, now a minister of the Kirk of Scotland, I was nevertheless rather behind the class in which I was placed both in years and in progress. This was a real disadvantage, and one to which a boy of lively temper and talents ought to be as little exposed as one who might be less expected to make up his lee-way, as it is called. The situation has the unfortunate effect of reconciling a boy of the former character (which in a posthumous work I may claim for my own) to holding a subordinate station among his class-fellows—to which he would otherwise affix disgrace. There is also, from the constitution of the High School, a certain danger not sufficiently attended to. The boys take precedence in their *places*, as they are called, according to their merit, and it requires a long while, in general, before even a clever boy, if he falls behind the class, or is put into one for which he is not quite ready, can force his way to the situation which his abilities really entitle him to hold. But, in the mean while, he is necessarily led to be the associate and companion of those inferior spirits with whom he is placed; for the system of precedence, though it does not limit the general intercourse among the boys, has nevertheless the effect of throwing them into clubs and coteries, according to the vicinity of the seats they hold. A boy of good talents, therefore, placed, even for a time, among his inferiors, especially if they be also his elders, learns to participate in their pursuits and objects of ambition, which are usually very distinct from the acquisition of learning; and it will be well if he does not also imitate them in that indifference which is contented with bustling over a lesson, so as to avoid punishment, without affecting superiority, or aiming at reward. It was probably owing to this circumstance that, although at a more advanced period of life, I have enjoyed considerable facility in acquiring languages, I did not make any great figure at the High School—or, at least, any exertions which I made were desultory and little to be depended on.

Our class contained some very excellent scholars. The first *Dux* was James Buchan, who retained his honoured place, almost without a day's interval, all the while we were at the High School. He was afterwards at the head of the medical staff in Egypt, and in exposing himself to the plague infection, by attending the hospitals there, displayed the same well-regulated and gentle, yet determined perseverance, which placed him most worthily at the head of his school-fellows, while many lads of livelier parts and dispositions held an inferior station. The next best scholars (*sed longo intervallo*) were my friend David Douglas, the heir and *élève* of the celebrated Adam Smith, and James Hope, now a Writer to the Signet, both since well known and distinguished in their departments of the law. As for myself, I glanced like a meteor from one end of the class to the other, and commonly disgusted my kind master as much by negligence and frivolity, as I occasionally pleased him by flashes of intellect and talent. Among my companions, my good nature and a flow of ready imagination rendered me very popular. Boys are uncommonly just in their feelings, and at least equally generous. My lameness, and the efforts which I made to supply that disadvantage, by making up in address what I wanted in activity, engaged the latter principle in my favour; and in the winter play hours, when hard exercise was impossible, my tales used to assemble an admiring audience round Luckie Brown's fireside, and happy was he that could sit next to the inexhaustible narrator. I was also, though often negligent of my own task, always ready to assist my friends, and hence I had a little party of staunch partisans and adherents, stout of hand and heart, though somewhat dull of head, the very tools for raising a hero to eminence. So, on the whole, I made a brighter figure in the *yards* than in the *class*.*

My father did not trust our education solely to our High School lessons. We had a tutor at home, a young man of an excellent disposition, and a laborious student. He was bred to the Kirk, but unfortunately took such a very strong turn to fanaticism, that he afterwards resigned an excellent living in a seaport town, merely because he could not persuade the mariners of the guilt of setting sail of a Sabbath,—in which, by the by, he was less likely to be successful, as, *cæteris paribus*, sailors, from an opinion that it is a fortunate omen, always choose to weigh anchor on that day. The calibre of this young man's understanding may be judged of by this anecdote; but in other respects, he was a faithful and active instructor; and from him chiefly I learned writing and arithmetic. I repeated to him my French lessons, and studied with him my themes in the classics, but not classically. I also acquired, by disputing with him, for this he readily permitted, some knowledge of school-divinity and church-history, and a great acquaintance in particular with the old books describing the early history of the Church of Scotland, the wars and sufferings of the Covenanters, and so forth. I, with a head on fire for chivalry, was a Cavalier; my friend was a Roundhead; I was a Tory, and he was a Whig. I hated Presbyterians, and admired Montrose with his victorious Highlanders; he liked the Presbyterian Ulysses, the dark and politic Argyle; so that we never wanted subjects of dispute, but our disputes were always amicable. In all these tenets there was no real conviction on my part, arising out of acquaintance with the views or principles of either party; nor had my antagonist address enough to turn the debate on such topics. I took up my politics at that period as King Charles II. did his religion, from an idea that the Cavalier creed was the more gentlemanlike persuasion of the two.

After having been three years under Mr. Fraser, our class was, in the usual routine of the school, turned over to Dr. Adam, the Rector. It was from this respectable man that I first learned the value of the knowledge I had hitherto considered only as a burdensome task. It was the fashion to remain two years at his class, where we read Cæsar, and Livy, and Sallust, in prose; Virgil, Horace, and Terence, in verse. I had by this time mastered, in some degree, the difficulties of the language, and began to be sensible of its beauties. This was really gathering grapes from thistles; nor shall I soon forget the swelling of my little pride when the Rector pronounced, that though many of my school-fellows understood the Latin better, *Gualterus Scott* was behind few in following and enjoying the author's meaning. Thus encouraged, I distinguished myself by some attempts at poetical versions from Horace and Virgil. Dr. Adam used to invite his scholars to such essays, but never made them tasks. I gained some distinction upon these occasions, and the Rector in future took much notice of me, and his judicious mixture of censure and praise went far to counterbalance my habits of indolence and inattention. I saw I was expected to do well, and I was piqued in honour to vindicate my master's favourable opinion. I climbed, therefore, to the first form; and, though I never made a first-rate Latinist, my schoolfellows, and what was of more consequence, I myself, considered that I had a character for learning to maintain. Dr. Adam, to whom I owed so much, never failed to remind me of my obligations when I had made some figure in the literary world. He was, indeed, deeply imbued with that fortunate vanity which alone could induce a man who has arms to pare and burn a muir to submit to the yet more toilsome task of cultivating youth. As Catholics confide in the imputed righteousness of their saints, so did the good old doctor plume himself upon the success of his scholars in life, all of which he never failed (and often justly) to claim as the creation, or at least the fruits, of his early instructions. He remembered the fate of every boy at his school during the fifty years he had superintended it, and always traced their success or misfortunes entirely to their attention or negligence when under his care. His "noisy mansion" which to others would have been a melancholy bedlam, was the pride of his heart; and the only fatigues he felt, amidst din and tumult, and the necessity of reading themes, hearing lessons, and maintaining some degree of order at the same time, were relieved by comparing himself to Cæsar, who could dictate to three secretaries at once;—so ready is vanity to lighten the labours of duty.

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* I read not long since, in that authentic record called the *Percy Anecdotes*, that I had been educated at Musselburgh school, where I had been distinguished as an absolute dunce, only Dr. Blair, seeing farther into the millstone, had pronounced there was fire in it. I never was at Musselburgh school in my life, and though I have met Dr. Blair at my father's and elsewhere, I never had the good fortune to attract his notice, to my knowledge. Lastly, I was never a dunce, nor thought to be so, but an incorrigibly idle imp, who was always longing to do something else than what was enjoined him.—[1826].

It is a pity that a man so learned, so admirably adapted for his station, so useful, so simple, so easily contented, should have had other subjects of mortification. But the magistrates of Edinburgh, not knowing the treasure they possessed in Dr. Adam, encouraged a savage fellow, called Nicol, one of the under-masters, in insulting his person and authority. This man was an excellent classical scholar, and an admirable convivial humourist (which latter quality recommended him to the friendship of Burns); but worthless, drunken, and inhumanly cruel to the boys under his charge. He carried his feud against the Rector within an inch of assassination, for he waylaid and knocked him down in the dark. The favour which this worthless rival obtained in the town-council led to other consequences, which for some time clouded poor Adam's happiness and fair fame. When the French Revolution broke out, and parties ran high in approving or condemning it, the doctor incautiously joined the former. This was very natural, for as all his ideas of existing governments were derived from his experience of the town-council of Edinburgh, it must be admitted they scarce brooked comparison with the free states of Rome and Greece, from which he borrowed his opinions concerning republics. His want of caution in speaking on the political topics of the day lost him the respect of the boys, most of whom were accustomed to hear very different opinions on those matters in the bosom of their families. This, however (which was long after my time), passed away with other heats of the period, and the doctor continued his labours till about a year since, when he was struck with palsy while teaching his class. He survived a few days, but becoming delirious before his dissolution, conceived he was still in school, and after some expressions of applause or censure, he said, "But it grows dark—the boys may dismiss"—and instantly expired

From Dr. Adam's class I should, according to the usual routine, have proceeded immediately to college. But, fortunately, I was not yet to lose, by a total dismission from constraint, the acquaintance with the Latin which I had acquired. My health had become rather delicate from rapid growth, and my father was easily persuaded to allow me to spend half-a-year at Kelso with my kind aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose inmate I again became. It was hardly worth mentioning that I had frequently visited her during our short vacations.

At this time she resided in a small house, situated very pleasantly in a large garden, to the eastward of the churchyard of Kelso, which extended down to the Tweed. It was then my father's property, from whom it was afterwards purchased by my uncle. My grandmother was now dead, and my aunt's only companion, besides an old maid-servant, was my cousin, Miss Barbara Scott, now Mrs. Meik. My time was here left entirely to my own disposal, excepting for about four hours in the day, when I was expected to attend the grammar-school of the village. The teacher at that time was Mr. Lancelot Whale, an excellent classical scholar, a humourist, and a worthy man. He had a supreme antipathy to the puns which his very uncommon name frequently gave rise to; insomuch, that he made his son spell the word *Wale*, which only occasioned the young man being nick-named *the Prince of Wales* by the military mess to which he belonged. As for Whale, senior, the least allusion to Jonah, or the terming him an odd fish, or any similar quibble, was sure to put him beside himself. In point of knowledge and taste, he was far too good for the situation he held, which only required that he should give his scholars a rough foundation in the Latin language. My time with him, though short, was spent greatly to my advantage and his gratification. He was glad to escape to Persius and Tacitus from the eternal Rudiments and Cornelius Nepos; and as perusing these authors with one who began to understand them was to him a labour of love, I made considerable progress under his instructions. I suspect, indeed, that some of the time dedicated to me was withdrawn from the instruction of his more regular scholars; but I was as grateful as I could. I acted as usher, and heard the inferior classes, and I spouted the speech of Galgacus at the public examination, which did not make the less impression on the audience that few of them probably understood one word of it.

In the mean while my acquaintance with English literature was gradually extending itself. In the intervals of my school hours I had always perused with avidity such books of history or poetry or voyages and travels as chance presented to me—not forgetting the usual, or rather ten times the usual quantity of fairy tales, eastern stories, romances, &c. These studies were totally unregulated and undirected. My tutor thought it almost a sin to open a profane play or poem; and my mother, besides that she might be in some degree trammelled by the religious scruples which he suggested, had no longer the opportunity to hear me read poetry as formerly. I found, however, in her dressing-room (where I slept at one time) some odd volumes of Shakspeare, nor can I easily forget the rapture with which I sate up in my shirt reading them by the light of a fire in her apartment, until the bustle of the family rising from supper warned me it was time to creep back to my bed, where I was supposed to have been safely deposited since nine o'clock. Chance, however, threw in my way a poetical preceptor. This was no other than the excellent and benevolent Dr. Blacklock, well-known at that time as a literary character. I know not how I attracted his attention, and that of some of the young men who boarded in his family; but so it was that I became a frequent and favoured guest. The kind old man opened to me the stores of his library, and through his recommendation I became intimate with Ossian and Spenser. I was delighted with both, yet I think chiefly with the latter poet. The tawdry repetitions of the Ossianic phraseology disgusted me rather sooner than might have been expected from my age. But Spenser I could have read for ever. Too young to trouble myself about the allegory, I considered all the knights and ladies and dragons and giants in their outward and exoteric sense, and God only knows how delighted I was to find myself in such society. As I had always a wonderful facility in retaining in my memory whatever verses pleased me, the quantity of Spenser's stanzas which I could repeat was really marvellous. But this memory of mine was a very fickle ally, and has through my whole life acted merely upon its own capricious motion, and might have enabled me to adopt old Beattie of Meikledale's answer, when complimented by a certain reverend divine on the strength of the same faculty:—"No, sir," answered the old Borderer, "I have no command of my memory. It only retains what hits my fancy, and probably, sir, if you were to preach to me for two hours, I would not be able when you finished to remember a word you had been saying." My memory was precisely of the same kind; it seldom failed to preserve most tenaciously a favourite passage of poetry, a playhouse ditty, or, above all, a Border-raid ballad; but names, dates, and the other technicalities of history, escaped me in a most melancholy degree. The philosophy of history, a much more important subject, was also a sealed book at this period of my life; but I gradually assembled much of what was striking and picturesque in historical narrative; and when, in riper years, I attended more to the deduction of general principles, I was furnished with a powerful host of examples in illustration of them. I was, in short, like an ignorant gamester, who kept up a good hand until he knew how to play it.

I left the High School, therefore, with a great quantity of general information, ill arranged indeed, and collected without system, yet deeply impressed upon my mind; readily assorted by my power of connexion and memory, and gilded, if I may be permitted to say so, by a vivid and active imagination. If my studies were not under any direction at Edinburgh, in the country, it may be well imagined, they were less so. A respectable subscription library, a circulating library of ancient standing, and some private book-shelves, were open to my random perusal, and I waded into the stream like a blind man into a ford, without the power of searching my way, unless by groping for it. My appetite for books was as ample and indiscriminating as it was indefatigable, and I since have had too frequently reason to repent that few ever read so much, and to so little purpose.

Among the valuable acquisitions I made about this time was an acquaintance with Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered, through the flat medium of Mr. Hoole's translation. But above all, I then first became acquainted with Bishop Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry. As I had been from infancy devoted to legendary lore of this nature, and only reluctantly withdrew my attention, from the scarcity of materials and the rudeness of those which I possessed, it may be imagined, but cannot be described, with what delight I saw pieces of the same kind which had amused my childhood, and still continued in secret the Delilahs of my imagination, considered as the subject of sober research, grave commentary, and apt illustration, by an editor who showed his poetical genius was capable of emulating the best qualities of what his pious labour preserved. I remember well the spot where I read these volumes for the first time. It was beneath a huge platanus-tree, in the ruins of what had been intended for an old-fashioned arbour in the *garden* I have mentioned. The summer day sped onward so fast, that notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was still found entranced in my intellectual banquet. To read and to remember was in this instance the same thing, and henceforth I overwhelmed my schoolfellows, and all who would hearken to me, with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings together, which were not common occurrences with me, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes, nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm. About this period also I became acquainted with the works of Richardson, and those of Mackenzie—(whom in later years I became entitled to call my friend)—with Fielding, Smollet, and some others of our best novelists.

To this period also I can trace distinctly the awaking of that delightful feeling for the beauties of natural objects which has never since deserted me. The neighbourhood of Kelso, the most beautiful, if not the most romantic village in Scotland, is eminently calculated to awaken these ideas. It presents objects, not only grand in themselves, but venerable from their association. The meeting of two superb rivers, the Tweed and the Teviot, both renowned in song—the ruins of an ancient Abbey—the more distant vestiges of Roxburgh Castle—the modern mansion of Fleurs, which is so situated as to combine the ideas of ancient baronial grandeur with those of modern taste—are in themselves objects of the first class; yet are so mixed, united, and melted among a thousand other beauties of a less prominent description, that they harmonize into one general picture, and please rather by unison than by concord. I believe I have written unintelligibly upon this subject, but it is fitter for the pencil than the pen. The romantic feelings which I have described as predominating in my mind, naturally rested upon and associated themselves with these grand features of the landscape around me; and the historical incidents, or traditional legends connected with many of them, gave to my admiration a sort of intense impression of reverence, which at times made my heart feel too big for its bosom. From this time the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our fathers' piety or splendour, became with me an insatiable passion, which, if circumstances had permitted, I would willingly have gratified by travelling over half the globe.

I was recalled to Edinburgh about the time when the College meets, and put at once to the Humanity class, under Mr. Hill, and the first Greek class, taught by Mr. Dalzell. The former held the reins of discipline very loosely, and though beloved by his students, for he was a good-natured man as well as a good scholar, he had not the art of exciting our attention as well as liking. This was a dangerous character with whom to trust one who relished labour as little as I did, and amid the riot of his class I speedily lost much of what I had learned under Adam and Whale. At the Greek class, I might have made a better figure, for Professor Dalzell maintained a great deal of authority, and was not only himself an admirable scholar, but was always deeply interested in the progress of his students. But here lay the villany. Almost all my companions who had left the High School at the same time with myself, had acquired a smattering of Greek before they came to College. I, alas! had none; and finding myself far inferior to all my fellow-students, I could hit upon no better mode of vindicating my equality than by professing my contempt for the language, and my resolution not to learn it. A youth who died early, himself an excellent Greek scholar, saw my negligence and folly with pain, instead of contempt. He came to call on me in George's Square, and pointed out in the strongest terms the silliness of the conduct I had adopted, told me I was distinguished by the name of the *Greek Blockhead*, and exhorted me to redeem my reputation while it was called to-day. My stubborn pride received this advice with sulky civility; the birth of my Mentor (whose name was Archibald, the son of an inn-keeper) did not, as I thought in my folly, authorize him to intrude upon me his advice. The other was not sharp-sighted, or his consciousness of a generous intention overcame his resentment. He offered me his daily and nightly assistance, and pledged himself to bring me forward with the foremost of my class. I felt some twinges of conscience, but they were unable to prevail over my pride and self-conceit. The poor lad left me more in sorrow than in anger, nor did we ever meet again. All hopes of my progress in the Greek were now over; insomuch that when we were required to write essays on the authors we had studied, I had the audacity to produce a composition in which I weighed Homer against Ariosto, and pronounced him wanting in the balance. I supported this heresy by a profusion of bad reading and flimsy argument. The wrath of the Professor was extreme, while at the same time he could not suppress his surprise at the quantity of out-of-the-way knowledge which I displayed. He pronounced upon me the severe sentence—that dunce I was, and dunce was to remain—which, however, my excellent and learned friend lived to revoke over a bottle of Burgundy, at our literary club at Fortune's, of which he was a distinguished member.

Meanwhile, as if to eradicate my slightest tincture of Greek, I fell ill during the middle of Mr. Dalzell's second class, and migrated a second time to Kelso—where I again continued a long time reading what and how I pleased, and of course reading nothing but what afforded me immediate entertainment. The only thing which saved my mind from utter dissipation was that turn for historical pursuit, which never abandoned me even at the idlest period. I had forsworn the Latin classics for no reason I know of, unless because they were akin to the Greek; but the occasional perusal of Buchanan's history, that of Mathew Paris, and other monkish chronicles, kept up a kind of familiarity with the language even in its rudest state. But I forgot the very letters of the Greek alphabet; a loss never to be repaired, considering what that language is, and who they were who employed it in their compositions.

About this period—or soon afterwards—my father judged it proper I should study mathematics, a study upon which I entered with all the ardour of novelty. My tutor was an aged person, Dr. MacFait, who had in his time been distinguished as a teacher of this science. Age, however, and some domestic inconveniences, had diminished his pupils, and lessened his authority amongst the few who remained. I think that had I been more fortunately placed for instruction, or had I had the spur of emulation, I might have made some progress in this science, of which under the circumstances I have mentioned I only acquired a very superficial smattering.

In other studies I was rather more fortunate; I made some progress in Ethics under Professor John Bruce, and was selected as one of his students whose progress he approved, to read an essay before Principal Robertson. I was farther instructed in Moral Philosophy at the class of Mr. Dugald Stewart, whose striking and impressive eloquence riveted the attention even of the most volatile student. To sum up my academical studies, I attended the class of History, then taught by the present Lord Woodhouselee, and, as far as I remember, no others, excepting those of the civil and municipal law. So that if my learning be flimsy and inaccurate, the reader must have some compassion even for an idle workman, who had so narrow a foundation to build upon. If, however, it should ever fall to the lot of youth to peruse these pages—let such a reader remember that it is with the deepest regret that I recollect in my manhood the opportunities of learning which I neglected in my youth; that through every part of my literary career I have felt pinched and hampered by my own ignorance; and that I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if by doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation of learning and science.

I imagine my father's reason for sending me to so few classes in the

College, was a desire that I should apply myself particularly to my legal studies. He had not determined whether I should fill the situation of an Advocate or a Writer; but judiciously considering the technical knowledge of the latter to be useful at least, if not essential, to a barrister, he resolved I should serve the ordinary apprenticeship of five years to his own profession. I accordingly entered into indentures with my father about 1785–6, and entered upon the dry and barren wilderness of forms and conveyances.

I cannot reproach myself with being entirely an idle apprentice—far less as the reader might reasonably have expected,

> "A clerk foredoom'd my father's soul to cross."

The drudgery, indeed, of the office I disliked, and the confinement I altogether detested; but I loved my father, and I felt the rational pride and pleasure of rendering myself useful to him. I was ambitious also; and among my companions in labour the only way to gratify ambition was to labour hard and well. Other circumstances reconciled me in some measure to the confinement. The allowance for copy-money furnished a little fund for the *menus plaisirs* of the circulating library and the Theatre; and this was no trifling incentive to labour. When actually at the oar, no man could pull it harder than I, and I remember writing upwards of 120 folio pages with no interval either for food or rest. Again, the hours of attendance on the office were lightened by the power of choosing my own books and reading them in my own way, which often consisted in beginning at the middle or the end of a volume. A deceased friend, who was a fellow apprentice with me, used often to express his surprise that, after such a hop-step-and-jump perusal, I knew as much of the book as he had been able to acquire from reading it in the usual manner. My desk usually contained a store of most miscellaneous volumes, especially works of fiction of every kind, which were my supreme delight. I might except novels, unless those of the better and higher class, for though I read many of them, yet it was with more selection than might have been expected. The whole Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy tribe I abhorred, and it required the art of Burney, or the feeling of Mackenzie, to fix my attention upon a domestic tale. But all that was adventurous and romantic I devoured without much discrimination, and I really believe I have read as much nonsense of this class as any man now living. Every thing which touched on knight-errantry was particularly acceptable to me, and I soon attempted to imitate what I so greatly admired. My efforts, however, were in the manner of the tale-teller, not of the bard.

My greatest intimate, from the days of my schooltide, was Mr. John Irving, now a Writer to the Signet. We lived near each other, and by joint agreement were wont, each of us, to compose a romance for the other's amusement. These legends, in which the martial and the miraculous always predominated, we rehearsed to each other during our walks, which were usually directed to the most solitary spots about Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags. We naturally sought seclusion, for we were conscious no small degree of ridicule would have attended our amusement, if the nature of it had become known.

Whole holidays were spent in this singular pastime, which continued for two or three years, and had, I believe, no small effect in directing the turn of my imagination to the chivalrous and romantic in poetry and prose.

Mean while, the translations of Mr. Hoole having made me acquainted with Tasso and Ariosto, I learned from his notes on the latter, that the Italian language contained a fund of romantic lore. A part of my earnings was dedicated to an Italian class which I attended twice a-week, and rapidly acquired some proficiency. I had previously renewed and extended my knowledge of the French language, from the same principle of romantic research. Tressan's romances, the Bibliothèque Bleue, and Bibliothèque de Romans, were already familiar to me, and I now acquired similar intimacy with the works of Dante, Boiardo, Pulci, and other eminent Italian authors. I fastened also, like a tiger, upon every collection of old songs or romances which chance threw in my way, or which my scrutiny was able to discover on the dusty shelves of John Sibbald's circulating library in the Parliament Square. This collection, now dismantled and dispersed, contained at that time many rare and curious works, seldom found in such a collection. Mr. Sibbald himself, a man of rough manners, but of some taste and judgment, cultivated music and poetry, and in his shop I had a distant view of some literary characters, besides the privilege of ransacking the stores of old French and Italian books, which were in little demand among the bulk of his subscribers. Here I saw the unfortunate Andrew Macdonald, author of Vimonda; and here, too, I saw at a distance the boast of Scotland, Robert Burns. Of the latter I shall presently have occasion to speak more fully.

I am inadvertently led to confound dates while I talk of this remote period, for, as I have no notes, it is impossible for me to remember with accuracy the progress of studies, if they deserve the name, so irregular and miscellaneous. But about the second year of my apprenticeship, my health, which, from rapid growth and other causes, had been hitherto rather uncertain and delicate, was affected by the breaking of a blood-vessel. The regimen I had to undergo on this occasion was far from agreeable. It was spring, and the weather raw and cold, yet I was confined to bed with a single blanket, and bled and blistered till I scarcely had a pulse left. I had all the appetite of a growing boy, but was prohibited any sustenance beyond what was absolutely necessary for the support of nature, and that in vegetables alone. Above all, with a considerable disposition to talk, I was not permitted to open my lips without one or two old ladies who watched my couch being ready at once to souse upon me, "imposing silence with a stilly sound." My only refuge was reading and playing at chess. To the romances and poetry, which I chiefly delighted in, I had always added the study of history, especially as connected with military events. I was encouraged in this latter study by a tolerable acquaintance with geography, and by the opportunities I had enjoyed while with Mr. MacFait to learn the meaning of the more ordinary terms of fortification. While, therefore, I lay in this dreary and silent solitude, I fell upon the resource of illustrating the battles I read of by the childish expedient of arranging shells, and seeds, and pebbles so as to represent encountering armies. Diminutive cross-bows were contrived to mimic artillery, and with the assistance of a friendly carpenter, I contrived to model a fortress, which, like that of Uncle Toby, represented whatever place happened to be uppermost in my imagination. I fought my way thus through Vertot's Knights of Malta,—a book which, as it hovered between history and romance, was exceedingly dear to me; and Orme's interesting and beautiful History of Indostan, whose copious plans, aided by the clear and luminous explanations of the author, rendered my imitative amusement peculiarly easy. Other moments of these weary weeks were spent in looking at the Meadow Walks, by assistance of a combination of mirrors so arranged that, while lying in bed, I could see the troops march out to exercise, or any other incident which occurred on that promenade.

After one or two relapses, my constitution recovered the injury it had sustained, though for several months afterwards I was restricted to a severe vegetable diet. And I must say, in passing, that though I gained health under this necessary restriction, yet it was far from being agreeable to me, and I was affected whilst under its influence with a nervousness which I never felt before or since. A disposition to start upon slight alarms—a want of decision in feeling and acting, which has not usually been my failing—an acute sensibility to trifling inconveniences — and an unnecessary apprehension of contingent misfortunes, rise to my memory as connected with my vegetable diet, although they may very possibly have been entirely the result of the disorder and not of the cure. Be this as it may, with this illness I bade farewell both to disease and medicine, for since that time, till the hour I am now writing, I have enjoyed a state of the most robust health, having only had to complain of occasional headaches or stomachic affections, when I have been long without taking exercise, or have lived too convivially—the latter having been occasionally though not habitually the error of my youth, as the former has been of my advanced life.

My frame gradually became hardened with my constitution, and being both tall and muscular, I was rather disfigured than disabled by my lameness. This personal disadvantage did not prevent me from taking much exercise on horseback, and making long journeys on foot, in the course of which I often walked from twenty to thirty miles a day. A distinct instance occurs to me. I remember walking with poor James Ramsay, my fellow-apprentice, now no more, and two other friends, to breakfast at Prestonpans. We spent the forenoon in visiting the ruins at Seton, and the field of battle at Preston—dined at Prestonpans on *tiled haddocks*, very sumptuously—drank half a bottle of port each, and returned in the evening. This could not be less than thirty miles, nor do I remember being at all fatigued upon the occasion.

These excursions on foot or horseback formed by far my most favourite amusement. I have all my life delighted in travelling, though I have never enjoyed that pleasure upon a large scale. It was a propensity which I sometimes indulged so unduly as to alarm and vex my parents. Wood, water, wilderness itself had an inexpressible charm for me, and I had a dreamy way of going much further than I intended, so that unconsciously my return was protracted, and my parents had sometimes serious cause of uneasiness. For example, I once set out with Mr. George Abercromby* (the son of the immortal General), Mr. William Clerk, and some others, to fish in the lake above Howgate, and the stream which descends from it into the Esk. We breakfasted at Howgate, and fished the whole day; and while we were on our return next morning, I was easily seduced by William Clerk, then a great intimate, to visit Pennycuik House, the seat of his family. Here he and John Irving, and I for their sake, were overwhelmed with kindness by the late Sir John Clerk and his lady, the present Dowager Lady Clerk. The pleasure of looking at fine pictures, the beauty of the place, and the flattering hospitality of the owners, drowned all recollection of home for a day or two. Mean while our companions, who had walked on without being aware of our digression, returned to Edinburgh without us, and excited no small alarm in my father's household. At length, however, they became accustomed to my escapades. My father used to protest to me on such occasions that he thought I was born to be a strolling pedlar, and though the prediction was intended to mortify my conceit, I am not sure that I altogether disliked it. I was now familiar with Shakspeare, and thought of Autolycus's song—

> "Jog on, jog on, the foot path way,
> And merrily hent the stile-a:
> A merry heart goes all the day,
> Your sad tires in a mile-a."

My principal object in these excursions was the pleasure of seeing romantic scenery, or what afforded me at least equal pleasure, the places which had been distinguished by remarkable historical events. The delight with which I regarded the former of course had general approbation, but I often found it difficult to procure sympathy with the interest I felt in the latter. Yet to me the wandering over the field of Bannockburn was the source of more exquisite pleasure than gazing upon the celebrated landscape from the battlements of Stirling castle. I do not by any means infer that I was dead to the feeling of picturesque scenery; on the contrary, few delighted more in its general effect. But I was unable with the eye of a painter to dissect the various parts of the scene, to comprehend how the one bore upon the other, to estimate the effect which various features of the view had in producing its leading and general effect. I have never, indeed, been capable of doing this with precision or nicety, though my latter studies have led me to amend and arrange my original ideas upon the subject. Even the humble ambition, which I long cherished, of making sketches of those places which interested me, from a defect of eye or of hand, was totally ineffectual. After long study and many efforts, I was unable to apply the elements of perspective or of shade to the scene before me, and was obliged to relinquish in despair an art which I was most anxious to practise. But show me an old castle or a field of battle, and I was at home at once, filled it with its combatants in their proper costume, and overwhelmed my hearers by the enthusiasm of my description. In crossing Magus Moor, near St. Andrews, the spirit moved me to give a picture of the assassination of the Archbishop of St. Andrews to some fellow-travellers with whom I was accidentally associated, and one of them, though well acquainted with the story, protested my narrative had frightened away his night's sleep. I mention this to show the distinction between a sense of the picturesque in action and in scenery. If I have since been able in poetry to trace with some success the principles of the latter, it has always been with reference to its general and leading features, or under some alliance with moral feeling; and even this proficiency has cost me study.—Mean while I endeavoured to make amends for my ignorance of drawing by adopting a sort of technical memory respecting the scenes I visited. Wherever I went, I cut a piece of a branch from a tree—these constituted what I called my log-book; and I intended to have a set of chess-men out of them, each having reference to the place where it was cut—as the kings from Falkland and Holy-Rood; the queens from Queen Mary's yew-tree at Crookston; the bishops from abbeys or episcopal palaces; the knights from baronial residences; the rooks from royal fortresses; and the pawns generally from places worthy of historical note. But this whimsical design I never carried into execution.

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* Now Lord Abercromby.—[1826].

With music it was even worse than with painting. My mother was anxious we should at least learn Psalmody; but the incurable defects of my voice and ear soon drove my teacher to despair.[*] It is only by long practice that I have acquired the power of selecting or distinguishing melodies; and although now few things delight or affect me more than a simple tune sung with feeling, yet I am sensible that even this pitch of musical taste has only been gained by attention and habit, and, as it were, by my feeling of the words being associated with the tune. I have, therefore, been usually unsuccessful in composing words to a tune, although my friend, Dr. Clarke, and other musical composers, have sometimes been able to make a happy union between their music and my poetry.

In other points, however, I began to make some amends for the irregularity of my education. It is well known that in Edinburgh one great spur to emulation among youthful students is in those associations called *literary societies*, formed not only for the purpose of debate, but of composition. These undoubtedly have some disadvantages, where a bold, petulant, and disputatious temper happens to be combined with considerable information and talent. Still, however, in order to such a person being actually spoiled by his mixing in such debates, his talents must be of a very rare nature, or his effrontery must be proof to every species of assault; for there is generally, in a well-selected society of this nature, talent sufficient to meet the forwardest, and satire enough to penetrate the most undaunted. I am particularly obliged to this sort of club for introducing me about my seventeenth year into the society which at one time I had entirely dropped; for, from the time of my illness at college, I had had little or no intercourse with any of my class-companions, one or two only excepted. Now, however, about 1788, I began to feel and take my ground in society. A ready wit, a good deal of enthusiasm, and a perception that soon ripened into tact and observation of character, rendered me an acceptable companion to many young men whose acquisitions in philosophy and science were infinitely superior to any thing I could boast.

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[*] The late Alexander Campbell, a warm-hearted man, and an enthusiast in Scottish music, which he sang most beautifully, had this ungrateful task imposed on him. He was a man of many accomplishments, but dashed with a *bizarrerie* of temper which made them useless to their proprietor. He wrote several books—as a Tour in Scotland, &c.—and he made an advantageous marriage, but fell nevertheless into distressed circumstances, which I had the pleasure of relieving, if I could not remove. His sense of gratitude was very strong, and showed itself oddly in one respect. He would never allow that I had a bad ear; but contended, that if I did not understand music, it was because I did not choose to learn it. But when he attended us in George's Square, our neighbour, Lady Cumming, sent to beg the boys might not be all flogged precisely at the same hour, as, though she had no doubt the punishment was deserved, the noise of the concord was really dreadful. Robert was the only one of our family who could sing, though my father was musical and a performer on the violoncello at the *gentlemen's concerts.*—[1826].

In the business of these societies—for I was a member of more than one successively—I cannot boast of having made any great figure. I never was a good speaker unless upon some subject which strongly animated my feelings; and, as I was totally unaccustomed to composition, as well as to the art of generalizing my ideas upon any subject, my literary essays were but very poor work. I never attempted them unless when compelled to do so by the regulations of the society, and then I was like the Lord of Castle Rackrent, who was obliged to cut down a tree to get a few fagots to boil the kettle; for the quantity of ponderous and miscellaneous knowledge, which I really possessed on many subjects, was not easily condensed, or brought to bear upon the object I wished particularly to become master of. Yet there occurred opportunities when this odd lumber of my brain, especially that which was connected with the recondite parts of history, did me, as Hamlet says, "yeoman's service." My memory of events was like one of the large, old-fashioned stone-cannons of the Turks—very difficult to load well and discharge, but making a powerful effect when by good chance any object did come within range of its shot. Such fortunate opportunities of exploding with effect maintained my literary character among my companions, with whom I soon met with great indulgence and regard. The persons with whom I chiefly lived at this period of my youth were William Clerk, already mentioned; James Edmonstoune, of Newton; George Abercromby; Adam Ferguson, son of the celebrated Professor Ferguson, and who combined the lightest and most airy temper with the best and kindest disposition; John Irving, already mentioned; the Honourable Thomas Douglas, now Earl of Selkirk; David Boyle,*—and two or three others, who sometimes plunged deeply into politics and metaphysics, and not unfrequently "doffed the world aside, and bid it pass."

Looking back on these times, I cannot applaud in all respects the way in which our days were spent. There was too much idleness, and sometimes too much conviviality: but our hearts were warm, our minds honourably bent on knowledge and literary distinction; and if I, certainly the least informed of the party, may be permitted to bear witness, we were not without the fair and creditable means of attaining the distinction to which we aspired. In this society I was naturally led to correct my former useless course of reading; for—feeling myself greatly inferior to my companions in metaphysical philosophy and other branches of regular study—I laboured, not without some success, to acquire at least such a portion of knowledge as might enable me to maintain my rank in conversation. In this I succeeded pretty well; but unfortunately then, as often since through my life, I incurred the deserved ridicule of my friends from the superficial nature of my acquisitions, which being, in the mercantile phrase, *got up* for society, very often proved flimsy in the texture; and thus the gifts of an uncommonly retentive memory and acute powers of perception were sometimes detrimental to their possessor, by encouraging him to a presumptuous reliance upon them.

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* Now Lord Justice-Clerk. [1826].

Amidst these studies, and in this society, the time of my apprenticeship elapsed; and in 1790, or thereabouts, it became necessary that I should seriously consider to which department of the law I was to attach myself. My father behaved with the most parental kindness. He offered, if I preferred his own profession, immediately to take me into partnership with him, which, though his business was much diminished, still afforded me an immediate prospect of a handsome independence. But he did not disguise his wish that I should relinquish this situation to my younger brother, and embrace the more ambitious profession of the bar. I had little hesitation in making my choice—for I was never very fond of money; and in no other particular do the professions admit of a comparison. Besides, I knew and felt the inconveniences attached to that of a writer; and I thought (like a young man) many of them were "ingenio haud subeunda meo." The appearance of personal dependence which that profession requires was disagreeable to me; the sort of connexion between the client and the attorney seemed to render the latter more subservient than was quite agreeable to my nature; and, besides, I had seen many sad examples while overlooking my father's business, that the utmost exertions, and the best meant services, do not secure the *man of business*, as he is called, from great loss, and most ungracious treatment on the part of his employers. The bar, though I was conscious of my deficiencies as a public speaker, was the line of ambition and liberty; it was that also for which most of my contemporary friends were destined. And, lastly, although I would willingly have relieved my father of the labours of his business, yet I saw plainly we could not have agreed on some particulars if we had attempted to conduct it together, and that I should disappoint his expectations if I did not turn to the bar. So to that object my studies were directed with great ardour and perseverance during the years 1789, 1790, 1791, 1792.

In the usual course of study, the Roman or civil law was the first object of my attention—the second, the Municipal Law of Scotland. In the course of reading on both subjects, I had the advantage of studying in conjunction with my friend William Clerk, a man of the most acute intellects and powerful apprehension, and who, should he ever shake loose the fetters of indolence by which he has been hitherto trammelled, cannot fail to be distinguished in the highest degree. We attended the regular classes of both laws in the University of Edinburgh. The civil law chair, now worthily filled by Mr. Alexander Irving, might at that time be considered as in *abeyance*, since the person by whom it was occupied had never been fit for the situation, and was then almost in a state of dotage. But the Scotch law lectures were those of Mr. David Hume, who still continues to occupy that situation with as much honour to himself as advantage to the country. I copied over his lectures twice with my own hand, from notes taken in the class, and when I have had occasion to consult them, I can never sufficiently admire the penetration and clearness of conception which were necessary to the arrangement of the fabric of law, formed originally under the strictest influence of feudal principles, and innovated, altered, and broken in upon by the change of times, of habits, and of manners, until it resembles some ancient castle, partly entire, partly ruinous, partly dilapidated, patched and altered during the succession of ages by a thousand additions and combinations, yet still exhibiting, with the marks of its antiquity, symptoms of the skill and wisdom of its founders, and capable of being analyzed and made the subject of a methodical plan by an architect who can understand the various styles of the different ages in which it was subjected to alteration. Such an architect has Mr. Hume been to the law of Scotland, neither wandering into fanciful and abstruse disquisitions, which are the more proper subject of the antiquary, nor satisfied with presenting to his pupils a dry and undigested detail of the laws in their present state, but combining the past state of our legal enactments with the present, and tracing clearly and judiciously the changes which took place, and the causes which led to them.

Under these auspices, I commenced my legal studies. A little parlour was assigned me in my father's house, which was spacious and convenient, and I took the exclusive possession of my new realms with all the feelings of novelty and liberty. Let me do justice to the only years of my life in which I applied to learning with stern, steady, and undeviating industry. The rule of my friend Clerk and myself was, that we should mutually qualify ourselves for undergoing an examination upon certain points of law every morning in the week, Sundays excepted. This was at first to have taken place alternately at each other's houses, but we soon discovered that my friend's resolution was inadequate to severing him from his couch at the early hour fixed for this exercitation. Accordingly, I agreed to go every morning to his house, which, being at the extremity of Prince's Street, New Town, was a walk of two miles. With great punctuality, however, I beat him up to his task every morning before seven o'clock, and in the course of two summers, we went, by way of question and answer, through the whole of Heineccius's Analysis of the Institutes and Pandects, as well as through the smaller copy of Erskine's Institutes of the Law of Scotland. This course of study enabled us to pass with credit the usual trials, which, by the regulations of the Faculty of Advocates, must be undergone by every candidate for admission into their body. My friend William Clerk and I passed these ordeals on the same days—namely, the civil law trial on the [30th June, 1791], and the Scots law trial on the [6th July, 1792]. On the [11th July, 1792], we both assumed the gown with all its duties and honours.

My progress in life during these two or three years had been gradually enlarging my acquaintance, and facilitating my entrance into good company. My father and mother, already advanced in life, saw little society at home, excepting that of near relations, or upon particular occasions, so that I was left to form connexions in a great measure for myself. It is not difficult for a youth with a real desire to please and be pleased, to make his way into good society in Edinburgh —or indeed any where—and my family connexions, if they did not greatly further, had nothing to embarrass my progress. I was a gentleman, and so welcome any where, if so be I could behave myself, as Tony Lumpkin says, "in a concatenation accordingly."

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CHAPTER II.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FRAGMENT—EDINBURGH—SANDY-KNOWE—BATH—PRESTONPANS—1771-1778.

Sir Walter Scott opens his brief account of his ancestry with a playful allusion to a trait of national character, which has, time out of mind, furnished merriment to the neighbours of the Scotch; but the zeal of pedigree was deeply rooted in himself, and he would have been the last to treat it with serious disparagement. It has often been exhibited under circumstances sufficiently grotesque; but it has lent strength to many a good impulse, sustained hope and self-respect under many a difficulty and distress, armed heart and nerve to many a bold and resolute struggle for independence; and prompted also many a generous act of assistance, which under its influence alone could have been accepted without any feeling of degradation.

He speaks modestly of his own descent; for, while none of his predecessors had ever sunk below the situation and character of a gentleman, he had but to go three or four generations back, and thence, as far as they could be followed, either on the paternal or maternal side, they were to be found moving in the highest ranks of our baronage. When he fitted up in his later years the beautiful hall of Abbotsford, he was careful to have the armorial bearings of his forefathers blazoned in due order on the compartments of its roof; and there are few in Scotland, under the titled nobility, who could trace their blood to so many stocks of historical distinction.

In the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, and Notes to the Lay of the Last Minstrel, the reader will find sundry notices of the "Bauld Rutherfords that were sae stout," and the Swintons of Swinton in Berwickshire, the two nearest houses on the maternal side. An illustrious old warrior of the latter family, Sir John Swinton, extolled by Froissart, is the hero of the dramatic sketch, "Halidon Hill;" and it is not to be omitted, that through the Swintons Sir Walter Scott could trace himself to William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, the poet and dramatist.* His respect for the worthy barons of Newmains and

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* On Sir Walter's copy of "Recreations with the Muses, by William Earl of Stirling, 1637," there is the following MS. note:—"Sir William Alexander, sixth Baron of Menstrie, and first Earl of Stirling, the friend of Drummond of Hawthornden and Ben Jon-

Dryburgh, of whom, in right of his father's mother, he was the representative, and in whose venerable sepulchre his remains now rest, was testified by his "Memorials of the Haliburtons," a small volume printed (for private circulation only) in the year 1820. His own male ancestors of the family of Harden, whose lineage is traced by Douglas in his Baronage of Scotland back to the middle of the fourteenth century, when they branched off from the great blood of Buccleuch, have been so largely celebrated in his various writings, that I might perhaps content myself with a general reference to those pages, their only imperishable monument. The antique splendour of the ducal house itself has been dignified to all Europe by the pen of its remote descendant; but it may be doubted whether his genius could have been adequately developed, had he not attracted, at an early and critical period, the kindly recognition and support of the Buccleuchs.

The race had been celebrated, however, long before his day, by a minstrel of its own; nor did he conceal his belief that he owed much to the influence exerted over his juvenile mind by the rude but enthusiastic clan-poetry of old *Satchells*, who describes himself *on his title-page* as

> "Captain Walter Scot, an old Souldier and no Scholler,
> And one that can write nane,
> But just the Letters of his Name."

His "True History of several honourable Families of the Right Honourable Name of Scot, in the Shires of Roxburgh and Selkirk, and others adjacent, gathered out of Ancient Chronicles, Histories, and Traditions of our Fathers," includes, among other things, a string of complimentary rhymes addressed to the first Laird of Raeburn; and the copy which had belonged to that gentleman, was in all likelihood about the first book of verses that fell into the poet's hand.* How

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son, died in 1640. His eldest son, William Viscount Canada, died before his father, leaving one son and three daughters by his wife, Lady Margaret Douglas, eldest daughter of William, first Marquis of Douglas. Margaret, the second of these daughters, married Sir Robert Sinclair of Longformacus in the Merse, to whom she bore two daughters, Anne and Jean. Jean Sinclair, the younger daughter, married Sir John Swinton of Swinton; and Jean Swinton, her eldest daughter, was the grandmother of the proprietor of this volume."

* His family well remember the delight which he expressed on receiving, in 1818, a copy of this first edition, a small dark quarto of 1688, from his friend Constable. He was breakfasting when the present was delivered, and said, "This is indeed the resurrection of an old ally—I mind *spelling* these lines." He read aloud the jingling epistle to his own great-great-grandfather, which, like the rest, concludes with a broad hint that, as the author had neither lands nor flocks—"no estate left except his designation"—the more fortunate kinsman who enjoyed, like Jason of old, a fair share of *fleeces*, might do worse than bestow on him some of King James's *broad pieces*. On rising from table, Sir Walter immediately wrote as follows on the blank leaf opposite to poor Satchells' honest title-page—

> "I, Walter Scott of Abbotsford, a poor scholar, no soldier, but a soldier's lover,
> In the style of my namesake and kinsman do hereby discover,
> That I have written the twenty-four letters twenty-four million times over;
> And to every true born Scott I do wish as many golden pieces,
> As ever were hairs in Jason's and Medea's golden fleeces."

The rarity of the original edition of Satchells is such, that the copy now at Abbotsford was the only one Mr. Constable had ever seen—and no wonder, for the author's *envoy* is in these words:—

> "Begone, my book, stretch forth thy wings and fly
> Amongst the nobles and gentility;
> Thou'rt not to sell to scavengers and clowns,
> But given to worthy persons of renown.

continually its wild and uncouth doggrel was on his lips to his latest day, all his familiars can testify; and the passages which he quoted with the greatest zest were those commemorative of two ancient worthies, both of whom had had to contend against physical misfortune similar to his own. The former of these, according to Satchells, was the immediate founder of the branch originally designed of Sinton, afterwards of Harden.

> "It is four hundred winters past in order
> Since that Buccleuch was Warden in the Border;
> A son he had at that same tide,
> Which was so lame could neither run nor ride.
> John, this lame son, if my author speaks true,
> He sent him to St. Mungo's in Glasgu,
> Where he remained a scholar's time,
> Then married a wife according to his mind....
> And betwixt them twa was procreat
> Headshaw, Askirk, SINTON, and Glack."

But, if the scholarship of *John the Lamiter* furnished his descendant with many a mirthful allusion, a far greater favourite was the memory of *William the Boltfoot*, who followed him in the sixth generation.

> "The Laird and Lady of Harden
> Betwixt them procreat was a son
> Called William Boltfoot of Harden"—

The emphasis with which this next line was quoted I can never forget—

> "*He did survive to be* A MAN."

He was, in fact, one of the "prowest knights" of the whole genealogy—a fearless horseman and expert spearman, renowned and dreaded; and I suppose I have heard Sir Walter repeat a dozen times, as he was dashing into the Tweed or Ettrick, "rolling red from brae to brae," a stanza from what he called an old ballad, though it was most likely one of his own early imitations.

> "To tak the foord he aye was first,
> Unless the English loons were near;
> Plunge vassal than, plunge horse and man,
> Auld Boltfoot rides into the rear."

"From childhood's earliest hour," says the poet in one of his last Journals, "I have rebelled against external circumstances." How largely the traditional famousness of the stalwart *Boltfoot* may have helped to develope this element of his character, I do not pretend to say; but I cannot avoid regretting that Lord Byron had not discovered such another "Deformed Transformed" among his own chivalrous progenitors.

So long as Sir Walter retained his vigorous habits, he used to make an autumnal excursion, with whatever friend happened to be his guest at the time, to the tower of Harden, the *incunabula* of his race. A more picturesque scene for the fastness of a lineage of Border marauders could not be conceived; and so much did he delight in it, remote

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The number's few I've printed, in regard
My charges have been great, and I hope reward;
I caus'd not print many above twelve score,
And the printers are engaged that they shall print no more."

and inaccessible as its situation is, that, in the earlier part of his life, he had nearly availed himself of his kinsman's permission to fit up the dilapidated *peel* for his summer residence. Harden (the ravine of hares) is a deep, dark, and narrow glen, along which a little mountain brook flows to join the river Borthwick, itself a tributary of the Teviot. The castle is perched on the brink of the precipitous bank, and from the ruinous windows you look down into the crows' nests on the summits of the old mouldering elms, that have their roots on the margin of the stream far below.—

> "Where Bortha hoarse, that loads the meads with sand,
> Rolls her red tide to Teviot's western strand,
> Through slaty hills, whose sides are shagged with thorn,
> Where springs in scattered tufts the dark-green corn,
> Towers wood-girt Harden far above the vale,
> And clouds of ravens o'er the turrets sail.
> A hardy race who never shrunk from war,
> The Scott, to rival realms a mighty bar,
> Here fixed his mountain home;—a wide domain,
> And rich the soil, had purple heath been grain;
> But what the niggard ground of wealth denied,
> From fields more bless'd his fearless arm supplied."[*]

It was to this wild retreat that the Harden of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, the Auld Wat of a hundred Border ditties, brought home, in 1567, his beautiful bride, Mary Scott, "the Flower of Yarrow," whose grace and gentleness have lived in song along with the stern virtues of her lord. She is said to have chiefly owed her celebrity to the gratitude of an English captive, a beautiful child, whom she rescued from the tender mercies of Wat's moss-troopers, on their return from a foray into Cumberland. The youth grew up under her protection, and is believed to have been the composer both of the words and the music of many of the best old songs of the Border. As Leyden says,

> "His are the strains whose wandering echoes thrill
> The shepherd lingering on the twilight hill,
> When evening brings the merry folding hours,
> And sun-eyed daisies close their winking flowers.
> He lived o'er Yarrow's Flower to shed the tear,
> To strew the holly leaves o'er Harden's bier!
> But none was found above the minstrel's tomb,
> Emblem of peace, to bid the daisy bloom.
> He, nameless as the race from which he sprung,
> Saved other names, and left his own unsung."

We are told, that when the last bullock which Auld Wat had provided from the English pastures was consumed, the Flower of Yarrow placed on her table a dish containing a pair of clean spurs; a hint to the company that they must bestir themselves for their next dinner. Sir Walter adds, in a note to the Minstrelsy, "Upon one occasion when the village herd was driving out the cattle to pasture, the old laird heard him call loudly to drive out Harden's cow. 'Harden's *cow!*' echoed the affronted chief; 'Is it come to that pass? by my faith they shall soon say Harden's *kye* (cows).' Accordingly, he sounded his bugle, set out with his followers, and next day returned with *a bow of kye, and a bassen'd* (brindled) *bull*. On his return with this gallant prey, he passed a very large haystack. It occurred to the provident laird that this would be extremely convenient to fodder his new stock of cattle; but as no means of transporting it were obvious, he was fain to take leave of it with the apostrophe, now become proverbial, *By my saul, had ye but four feet ye should not stand lang there.* In short, as Froissart says of a similar class of feudal robbers, "nothing came amiss to them that was not *too heavy or too hot.*"

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[*] Leyden, the author of these beautiful lines, has borrowed, as the Lay of the Last Minstrel did also, from one of Satchell's primitive couplets—

> "If heather-tops had been corn of the best,
> Then Buccleugh mill had gotten a noble grist."

Another striking chapter in the genealogical history belongs to the marriage of Auld Wat's son and heir, afterwards Sir William Scott of Harden, distinguished by the early favour of James VI., and severely fined for his loyalty under the usurpation of Cromwell. The period of this gentleman's youth was a very wild one in that district. The Border clans still made war on each other occasionally, much in the fashion of their forefathers; and the young and handsome heir of Harden, engaging in a foray upon the lands of Sir Gideon Murray of Elibank, treasurer-depute of Scotland, was overpowered by that baron's retainers, and carried in shackles to his castle, now a heap of ruins, on the banks of the Tweed. Elibank's "doomtree" extended its broad arms close to the gates of his fortress, and the indignant laird was on the point of desiring his prisoner to say a last prayer, when his more considerate dame interposed milder counsels, suggesting that the culprit was born to a good estate, and that they had three unmarried daughters. Young Harden, not, it is said, without hesitation, agreed to save his life by taking the plainest of the three off their hands, and the contract of marriage, executed instantly on the parchment of a drum, is still in the charter-chest of his noble representative.

Walter Scott, the third son of this couple, was the first Laird of Raeburn, already alluded to as one of the patrons of Satchells. He married Isabel Macdougal, daughter of Macdougal of Makerstoun—a family of great antiquity and distinction in Roxburghshire, of whose blood, through various alliances, the poet had a large share in his veins. Raeburn, the son and brother of two steady cavaliers, and married into a family of the same political creed, became a Whig, and at last a Quaker; and the reader will find, in one of the notes to The Heart of Mid-Lothian, a singular account of the persecution to which this backsliding exposed him at the hands of both his own and his wife's relations. He was incarcerated (A. D. 1665), first at Edinburgh and then at Jedburgh, by order of the Privy Council—his children were forcibly taken from him, and a heavy sum was levied on his estate yearly, for the purposes of their education beyond the reach of his perilous influence. "It appears," says Sir Walter, in a MS. memorandum now before me, "that the Laird of Makerstoun, his brother-in-law, joined with Raeburn's own elder brother, Harden, in this singular persecution, as it will now be termed by Christians of all persuasions. It was observed by the people that the male line of the second Sir William of Harden became extinct in 1710, and that the representation of Makerstoun soon passed into the female line. They assigned as a cause, that when the wife of Raeburn found herself deprived of her husband, and refused permission even to see her children, she pronounced a malediction on her husband's brother as well as on her own, and prayed that a male of their body might not inherit their property."

The MS. adds, "of the first Raeburn's two sons it may be observed, that, thanks to the discipline of the Privy Council, they were both good scholars." Of these sons, Walter, the second, was the poet's great-grandfather, the enthusiastic Jacobite of the autobiographical fragment, —who is introduced,

> "With amber beard and flaxen hair,
> And reverend apostolic air,"

in the epistle prefixed to the sixth canto of Marmion. A good portrait of Bearded Wat, painted for his friend Pitcairn, was presented by the doctor's grandson, the Earl of Kellie, to the father of Sir Walter. It is now at Abbotsford; and shows a considerable resemblance to the poet. Some verses addressed to the original by his kinsman Walter Scott of Harden, are given in one of the notes to Marmion. The old gentleman himself is said to have written verses occasionally, both English and Latin; but I never heard more than the burden of a drinking-song—

> "Barba crescat, barba crescat,
> Donec carduus revirescat."

Scantily as the worthy Jacobite seems to have been provided with this world's goods, he married the daughter of a gentleman of good condition, "through whom," says the MS. Memorandum already quoted, "his descendants have inherited a connexion with some honourable branches of the *Slioch nan Diarmid*, or Clan of Campbell." To this connexion Sir Walter owed, as we shall see hereafter, many of those early opportunities for studying the manners of the Highlanders, to which the world are indebted for Waverley, Rob Roy, and the Lady of the Lake.

Robert Scott, the son of Beardie, formed also an honourable alliance. His father-in-law, Thomas Haliburton,* the last but one of the "good lairds of Newmains," entered his marriage as follows in the domestic record, which Sir Walter's pious respect induced him to have printed nearly a century afterwards:—"My second daughter Barbara is married to Robert Scott, son to Walter Scott, uncle to Raeburn, upon this sixteen day of July, 1728, at my house of Dryburgh, by Mr. James Innes, minister of Mertoun, their mothers being cousings;

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* "From the genealogical deduction in the Memorials, it appears that the Haliburtons of Newmains were descended from and represented the ancient and once powerful family of Haliburton of Mertoun, which became extinct in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The first of this latter family possessed the lands and barony of Mertoun by a charter granted by Archibald Earl of Douglas and Lord of Galloway (one of those tremendous lords whose coronets counterpoised the Scottish crown) to Henry de Haliburton, whom he designates as his standard-bearer, on account of his service to the earl in England. On this account the Haliburtons of Mertoun and those of Newmains, in addition to the arms borne by the Haliburtons of Dirleton (the ancient chiefs of that once great and powerful but now almost extinguished name) viz. *or*, on a bend *azure*, three mascles of the first—gave the distinctive bearing of a buckle of the second in the sinister canton. These arms still appear on various old tombs in the abbeys of Melrose and Dryburgh, as well as on their house at Dryburgh, which was built in 1572."—*MS. Memorandum*, 1820. Sir Walter was served heir to these Haliburtons soon after the date of this Memorandum, and thenceforth quartered the arms above described with those of his paternal family.

may the blessing of the Lord rest upon them, and make them comforts to each other and to all their relations;" to which the editor of the Memorials adds this note, "May God grant that the prayers of the excellent persons who have passed away may avail for the benefit of those who succeed them!—*Abbotsford*, Nov. 1824."

I need scarcely remind the reader of the exquisite description of the poet's grandfather, in the Introduction to the third Canto of Marmion—

——"the thatched mansion's grey-hair'd sire,
Wise without learning, plain and good,
And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood;
Whose eye, in age quick, clear, and keen,
Showed what in youth its glance had been;
Whose doom discording neighbours sought,
Content with equity unbought."

In the Preface to Guy Mannering, we have an anecdote of Robert Scott in his earlier days: "My grandfather, while riding over Charterhouse Moor, then a very extensive common, fell suddenly among a large band of gipsies, who were carousing in a hollow surrounded by bushes. They instantly seized on his bridle with shouts of welcome, exclaiming that they had often dined at his expense, and he must now stay and share their cheer. My ancestor was a little alarmed, for he had more money about his person than he cared to risk in such society. However, being naturally a bold lively spirited man, he entered into the humour of the thing, and sat down to the feast, which consisted of all the varieties of game, poultry, pigs, and so forth, that could be collected by a wide and indiscriminate system of plunder. The dinner was a very merry one, but my relative got a hint from some of the older gipsies, just when 'the mirth and fun grew fast and furious,' and mounting his horse accordingly, he took a French leave of his entertainers." His grandson might have reported more than one scene of the like sort in which he was himself engaged, while hunting the same district, not in quest of foxes or of cattle sales, like the goodman of Sandy-Knowe, but of ballads for the Minstrelsy. Gipsy stories, as we are told in the same Preface, were frequently in the mouth of the old man when his face 'brightened at the evening fire,' in the days of the poet's childhood. And he adds, that 'as Dr. Johnson had a shadowy recollection of Queen Anne as a stately lady in black, adorned with diamonds,' so his own memory was haunted with 'a solemn remembrance of a woman of more than female height, dressed in a long red cloak, who once made her appearance beneath the thatched roof of Sandy-Knowe, commenced acquaintance by giving him an apple, and whom he looked on, nevertheless, with as much awe as the future doctor, High Church and Tory as he was doomed to be, could look upon the Queen.' This was Madge Gordon, grand-daughter of Jean Gordon, the prototype of Meg Merrilies.

Of Robert of Sandy-Knowe also there is a very tolerable portrait at Abbotsford, and the likeness of the poet to his grandfather must have forcibly struck every one who has seen it. Indeed, but for its wanting some inches in elevation of forehead (a considerable want it must be allowed), the picture might be mistaken for one of Sir Walter Scott. The keen shrewd expression of the eye, and the remarkable length and compression of the upper lip, bring him exactly before me as he appeared when entering with all the zeal of a professional agriculturist into the merits of a pit of marle discovered at Abbotsford. Had the old man been represented with his cap on his head, the resemblance to one particular phasis of the most changeful of countenances would have been perfect.

Robert Scott had a numerous progeny, and Sir Walter has intimated his intention of recording several of them "with a sincere tribute of gratitude" in the contemplated prosecution of his autobiography. Two of the younger sons were bred to the naval service of the East India Company; one of whom died early and unmarried; the other was the excellent Captain Robert Scott, of whose kindness to his nephew some particulars are given in the Ashestiel Fragment, and more will occur hereafter. Another son, Thomas, followed the profession of his father with ability, and retired in old age upon a handsome independence, acquired by his industrious exertions. He was twice married, first to his near relation, a daughter of Raeburn; and secondly to Miss Rutherford of Know-South, the estate of which respectable family is now possessed by his son Charles Scott, an amiable and high-spirited gentleman, who was always a special favourite with his eminent kinsman. The death of Thomas Scott is thus recorded in one of the MS. notes on his nephew's own copy of the Haliburton Memorials:—"The said Thomas Scott died at Monklaw, near Jedburgh, at two of the clock, 27th January, 1823, in the 90th year of his life, and fully possessed of all his faculties. He read till nearly the year before his death; and being a great musician on the Scotch pipes, had, when on his deathbed, a favourite tune played over to him by his son James, that he might be sure he left him in full possession of it. After hearing it, he hummed it over himself, and corrected it in several of the notes. The air was that called *Sour Plumbs in Galashiels.* When barks and other tonics were given him during his last illness, he privately spat them into his handkerchief, saying, as he had lived all his life without taking doctor's drugs, he wished to die without doing so."

I visited this old man, two years before his death, in company with Sir Walter, and thought him about the most venerable figure I had ever set my eyes on—tall and erect, with long flowing tresses of the most silvery whiteness, and stockings rolled up over his knees, after the fashion of three generations back. He sat reading his Bible without spectacles, and did not, for a moment, perceive that any one had entered his room, but on recognising his nephew he rose, with cordial alacrity, kissing him on both cheeks, and exclaiming, "God bless thee, Walter, my man, thou hast risen to be great, but thou wast always good." His remarks were lively and sagacious, and delivered with a touch of that humour which seems to have been shared by most of the family. He had the air and manner of an ancient gentleman, and must in his day have been eminently handsome. I saw more than once, about the same period, this respectable man's sister, who had married her cousin Walter, Laird of Raeburn—thus adding a new link to the closeness of the family connexion. She also must have been, in her youth, remarkable for personal attractions; as it was, she dwells on my memory as the perfect picture of an old Scotch lady, with a great deal of simple dignity in her bearing, but with the softest eye, and the sweetest voice, and a charm of meekness and gentleness about every look and expression; all which contrasted strikingly enough with the stern dry aspect and manners of her husband, a right descendant of the moss-troopers of Harden, who never seemed at his ease but on horseback, and continued to be the boldest fox-hunter of the district, even to the verge of eighty. The poet's aunt spoke her native language pure and undiluted, but without the slightest tincture of that vulgarity which now seems almost unavoidable in the oral use of a dialect so long banished from courts, and which has not been avoided by any modern writer who has ventured to introduce it, with the exception of Scott, and I may add, speaking generally, of Burns. Lady Raeburn, as she was universally styled, may be numbered with those friends of early days whom her nephew has alluded to in one of his prefaces as preserving what we may fancy to have been the old Scotch of Holyrood.

The particulars which I have been setting down may help English readers to form some notion of the structure of society in those southern districts of Scotland. When Satchells wrote, he boasted that Buccleuch could summon to his banner one hundred lairds, all of his own name, with ten thousand more—landless men, but still of the same blood. The younger sons of these various lairds were, through many successive generations, portioned off with fragments of the inheritance until such subdivision could be carried no farther, and then the cadet, of necessity, either adopted the profession of arms, in some foreign service very frequently, or became a cultivator on the estate of his own elder brother, of the chieftain of his branch, or of the great chief and patriarchal protector of the whole clan. Until the commerce of England, and above all, the military and civil services of the English colonies were thrown open to the enterprise of the Scotch, this system of things continued entire. It still remained in force to a considerable extent at the time when the Goodman of Sandy-Knowe was establishing his children in the world—and I am happy to say, that it is far from being abolished even at the present day. It was a system which bound together the various classes of the rural population in bonds of mutual love and confidence: the original community of lineage was equally remembered on all sides; the landlord could count for more than his rent on the tenant, who regarded him rather as a father or an elder brother, than as one who owed his superiority to mere wealth; and the farmer who, on fit occasions, partook on equal terms of the chase and the hospitality of his landlord, went back with content and satisfaction to the daily labours of a vocation which he found no one disposed to consider as derogating from his gentle blood. Such delusions, if delusions they were, held the natural arrogance of riches in check, taught the poor man to believe that in virtuous poverty he had nothing to blush for, and spread over the whole being of the community the gracious spirit of a primitive humanity.

Walter Scott, the eldest son of Robert of Sandy-Knowe, appears to have been the first of the family that ever adopted a town life, or any thing claiming to be classed among the learned professions. His branch of the law, however, could not in those days be advantageously prosecuted without extensive connexions in the country; his own were too respectable not to be of much service to him in his calling, and they were cultivated accordingly. His professional visits to Roxburghshire and Ettrick Forest were, in his vigorous life, very frequent; and though he was never supposed to have any tincture either of romance or poetry in his composition, he retained to the last a warm affection for his native district, with a certain reluctant flavour of the old feelings and prejudices of the Borderer. I have little to add to Sir Walter's short and respectful notice of his father, except that I have heard it confirmed by the testimony of many less partial observers. According to every account, he was a most just, honourable, conscientious man; only too high of spirit for some parts of his business. "He passed from the cradle to the grave," says a surviving relation, "without making an enemy or losing a friend. He was a most affectionate parent, and if he discouraged, rather than otherwise, his son's early devotion to the pursuits which led him to the height of literary eminence, it was only because he did not understand what such things meant, and considered it his duty to keep his young man to that path in which good sense and industry might, humanly speaking, be thought sure of success."

Sir Walter's mother was short of stature, and by no means comely, at least after the days of her early youth. She had received, as became the daughter of an eminently learned physician, the best sort of education then bestowed on young gentlewomen in Scotland. The poet, speaking of Mrs. Euphemia Sinclair, the mistress of the school at which his mother was reared, to the ingenious local antiquary, Mr. Robert Chambers, said that "she must have been possessed of uncommon talents for education, as all her young ladies were, in after life, fond of reading, wrote and spelled admirably, were well acquainted with history and the belles lettres, without neglecting the more homely duties of the needle and accompt-book; and perfectly well-bred in society." Mr. Chambers adds, "Sir W. further communicated that his mother, and many others of Mrs. Sinclair's pupils, were sent afterwards *to be finished off* by the Honourable Mrs. Ogilvie, a lady who trained her young friends to a style of manners which would now be considered intolerably stiff. Such was the effect of this early training upon the mind of Mrs. Scott, that even when she approached her eightieth year, she took as much care to avoid touching her chair with her back, as if she had still been under the stern eye of Mrs. Ogilvie."[*] The physiognomy of the poet bore, if their portraits may be trusted, no resemblance to either of his parents.

Mr. Scott was nearly thirty years of age when he married, and six children, born to him between 1759 and 1766, all perished in infancy.[†]

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[*] See Chambers's Traditions of Edinburgh, vol. ii. pp. 127–131. The functions here ascribed to Mrs. Ogilvie may appear to modern readers little consistent with her rank. Such things, however, were not uncommon in those days in poor old Scotland. Ladies with whom I have conversed in my youth well remembered an *Honourable Mrs. Maitland* who practised the obstetric art in the Cowgate.

[†] In Sir Walter Scott's desk, after his death, there was found a little packet containing six locks of hair, with this inscription in the handwriting of his mother:—

"1. Anne Scott, born March 10, 1759.
2. Robert Scott, born August 22, 1760.
3. John Scott, born November 28, 1761.

A suspicion that the close situation of the College Wynd had been unfavourable to the health of his family, was the motive that induced him to remove to the house which he ever afterwards occupied in George's Square. This removal took place shortly after the poet's birth; and the children born subsquently were in general healthy. Of a family of twelve, of whom six lived to maturity, not one now survives; nor have any of them left descendants, except Sir Walter himself, and his next and dearest brother, Thomas Scott.

He says that his consciousness of existence dated from Sandy-Knowe; and how deep and indelible was the impression which its romantic localities had left on his imagination, I need not remind the readers of Marmion and the Eve of St. John. On the summit of the Crags which overhang the farm-house stands the ruined tower of Smailholme, the scene of that fine ballad; and the view from thence takes in a wide expanse of the district in which, as has been truly said, every field has its battle, and every rivulet its song:—

"The lady looked in mournful mood,
Looked over hill and vale,
O'er Mertoun's wood, and Tweed's fair flood,
And all down Teviotdale"—

Mertoun, the principal seat of the Harden family, with its noble groves; nearly in front of it, across the Tweed, Lessudden, the comparatively small but still venerable and stately abode of the Lairds of Raeburn; and the hoary Abbey of Dryburgh, surrounded with yew-trees as ancient as itself, seem to lie almost below the feet of the spectator. Opposite him rise the purple peaks of Eildon, the traditional scene of Thomas the Rymer's interview with the Queen of Faerie; behind are the blasted peel which the seer of Ercildoun himself inhabited, 'the Broom of the Cowdenknowes,' the pastoral valley of the Leader, and the bleak wilderness of Lammermoor. To the eastward the desolate grandeur of Hume Castle breaks the horizon, as the eye travels towards the range of the Cheviot. A few miles westward, Melrose, 'like some tall rock with lichens grey,' appears clasped amidst the windings of the Tweed; and the distance presents the serrated mountains of the Gala, the Ettrick, and the Yarrow, all famous in song. Such were the objects that had painted the earliest images on the eye of the last and greatest of the Border Minstrels.

As his memory reached to an earlier period of childhood than that of almost any other person, so assuredly no poet has given to the world a picture of the dawning feelings of life and genius, at once so simple, so beautiful, and so complete, as that of his epistle to William Erskine, the chief literary confidant and counsellor of his prime of manhood,

"Whether an impulse that has birth
Soon as the infant wakes on earth,
One with our feelings and our powers,
And rather part of us than ours;

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4. Robert Scott, born June 7, 1763.
5. Jean Scott, born March 27, 1765.
6. Walter Scott, born August 30, 1766.

All these are dead, and none of my present family was born till some time afterwards."

Or whether fitlier term'd the sway
Of habit, formed in early day,
Howe'er derived, its force confest
Rules with despotic sway the breast,
And drags us on by viewless chain,
While taste and reason plead in vain. . . . .
Thus, while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charm'd me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime
Return the thoughts of early time,
And feelings roused in life's first day,
Glow in the line and prompt the lay.
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,
Which charm'd my fancy's wakening hour.
It was a barren scene and wild
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew
And honey-suckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.
I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all its round surveyed;
And still I thought that shattered tower
The mightiest work of human power,
And marvelled as the aged hind,
With some strange tale bewitch'd my mind,
Of forayers who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurr'd their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And home returning, fill'd the hall
With revel, wassel-rout, and brawl.
Methought that still with trump and clang
The gateway's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features, seam'd with scars,
Glared thro' the windows' rusty bars:
And ever, by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of wo or mirth,
Of lovers' slights, of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms—
Of patriot battles won of old
By Wallace Wight and Bruce the Bold—
Of later fields of feud and fight,
When, pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
Had swept the scarlet ranks away.
While stretched at length upon the floor,
Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic ranks of war displayed,
And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,
And still the scattered Southron fled before."

There are still living in that neighbourhood two old women, who were in the domestic service of Sandy-Knowe, when the lame child was brought thither in the third year of his age. One of them, Tibby Hunter, remembers his coming well; and that 'he was a sweet-tempered bairn, a darling with all about the house. The young ewe-milkers delighted, she says, to carry him about on their backs among the crags; and he was 'very gleg (quick) at the uptake, and soon kenned every sheep and lamb by headmark as well as any of them.' His great pleasure, however, was in the society of the 'aged hind,' recorded in the epistle to Erskine. 'Auld Sandy Ormistoun,' called, from the most dignified part of his function, 'the Cow-bailie,' had the chief superintendence of the flocks that browsed upon 'the velvet tufts of loveliest green.' If the child saw him in the morning, he could not be satisfied unless the old man would set him astride on his shoulder, and take him to keep company as he lay watching his charge.

> "Here was poetic impulse given
> By the green hill and clear blue heaven."

The cow-bailie blew a particular note on his whistle, which signified to the maid-servants in the house below when the little boy wished to be carried home again. He told his friend, Mr. Skene of Rubislaw, when spending a summer day in his old age among these well-remembered crags, that he delighted to roll about on the grass all day long in the midst of the flock, and that 'the sort of fellowship he thus formed with the sheep and lambs had impressed his mind with a degree of affectionate feeling towards them which had lasted throughout life.' There is a story of his having been forgotten one day among the knolls when a thunder-storm came on; and his aunt, suddenly recollecting his situation, and running out to bring him home, is said to have found him lying on his back, clapping his hands at the lightning, and crying out, 'Bonny, bonny!" at every flash.

I find the following marginal note on his copy of Allan Ramsay's Tea-Table Miscellany (edition 1724): "This book belonged to my grandfather, Robert Scott, and out of it I was taught Hardiknute by heart before I could read the ballad myself. It was the first poem I ever learnt—the last I shall ever forget." According to Tibby Hunter, he was not particularly fond of his book, embracing every pretext for joining his friend the Cowbailie out of doors; but 'Miss Jenny was a grand hand at keeping him to the bit, and by degrees he came to read brawly.'* An early acquaintance of a higher class, Mrs. Duncan, the wife of the present excellent minister of Mertoun, informs me, that though she was younger than Sir Walter, she has a dim remembrance of the interior of Sandy-Knowe:—'Old Mrs. Scott sitting, with her spinning-wheel, at one side of the fire, in a *clean clean* parlour; the grandfather, a good deal failed, in his elbow-chair opposite; and the little boy lying on the carpet, at the old man's feet, listening to the Bible, or whatever good book Miss Jenny was reading to them.'

Robert Scott died before his grandson was four years of age; and I heard him mention when he was an old man that he distinctly remembered the writing and sealing of the funeral letters, and all the ceremonial of the melancholy procession as it left Sandy-Knowe. I shall conclude my notices of the residence at Sandy-Knowe with observing, that in Sir Walter's account of the friendly clergyman who so often sat at his grandfather's fireside, we cannot fail to trace many features of the secluded divine in the novel of Saint Ronan's Well.

I have nothing to add to what he has told us of that excursion to

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* This old woman still possesses 'the *banes*' (bones)—that is to say, the boards—of a Psalm-book, which Master Walter gave her at Sandy-Knowe. 'He chose it,' she says, 'of a very large print, that I might be able to read it when I was *very auld—forty year auld;* but the bairns pulled the leaves out langsyne.'

England which interrupted his residence at Sandy-Knowe for about a twelvemonth, except that I had often been astonished, long before I read his autobiographic fragment, with the minute recollection he seemed to possess of all the striking features of the city of Bath, which he had never seen again since he quitted it before he was six years of age. He has himself alluded, in his Memoir, to the lively recollection he retained of his first visit to the theatre, to which his uncle Robert carried him to witness a representation of As You Like It. In his Reviewal of the Life of John Kemble, written in 1826, he has recorded that impression more fully, and in terms so striking, that I must copy them in this place:—

"There are few things which those gifted with any degree of imagination recollect with a sense of more anxious and mysterious delight than the first dramatic representation which they have witnessed. The unusual form of the house, filled with such groups of crowded spectators, themselves forming an extraordinary spectacle to the eye which has never witnessed it before; yet all intent upon that wide and mystic curtain, whose dusky undulations permit us now and then to discern the momentary glitter of some gaudy form, or the spangles of some sandaled foot, which trips lightly within: Then the light, brilliant as that of day; then the music, which, in itself a treat sufficient in every other situation, our inexperience mistakes for the very play we came to witness; then the slow rise of the shadowy curtain, disclosing, as if by actual magic, a new land, with woods, and mountains, and lakes, lighted, it seems to us, by another sun, and inhabited by a race of beings different from ourselves, whose language is poetry,—whose dress, demeanour, and sentiments seem something supernatural,—and whose whole actions and discourse are calculated not for the ordinary tone of every-day life, but to excite the stronger and more powerful faculties—to melt with sorrow, overpower with terror, astonish with the marvellous, or convulse with irresistible laughter:—all these wonders stamp indelible impressions on the memory. Those mixed feelings also, which perplex us between a sense that the scene is but a plaything, and an interest which ever and anon surprises us into a transient belief that that which so strongly affects us cannot be fictitious; those mixed and puzzling feelings, also, are exciting in the highest degree. Then there are the bursts of applause, like distant thunder, and the permission afforded to clap our little hands, and add our own scream of delight to a sound so commanding. All this, and much, much more, is fresh in our memory, although, when we felt these sensations, we looked on the stage which Garrick had not yet left. It is now a long while since; yet we have not passed many hours of such unmixed delight, and we still remember the sinking lights, the dispersing crowd, with the vain longings which we felt that the music would again sound, the magic curtain once more arise, and the enchanting dream recommence; and the astonishment with which we looked upon the elder part of our company, who, having the means, did not spend every evening in the theatre."*

Probably it was this performance that first tempted him to open the page of Shakspeare. Before he returned to Sandy-Knowe, assuredly, notwithstanding the modest language of his autobiography, the progress which had been made in his intellectual education was extraordinary; and it is impossible to doubt that his hitherto almost sole tutoress, Miss Jenny Scott, must have been a woman of tastes and acquirements very far above what could have been often found among Scotch ladies, of any but the highest class at least, in that day. In the winter of 1777, she and her charge spent some few weeks—not happy weeks, the "Memoir" hints them to have been—in George's Square, Edinburgh; and it so happened, that during this little interval, Mr. and Mrs. Scott received in their domestic circle a guest capable of appreciating, and, fortunately for us, of recording in a very striking manner the remarkable developement of young Walter's faculties. Mrs. Cockburn, mentioned by him in his Memoir as the authoress of the modern "Flowers of the Forest," born a Rutherford, of Fairnalie, in Selkirkshire, was distantly related to the poet's mother, with whom she had through life been in habits of intimate friendship. This accomplished woman was staying at Ravelstone, in the vicinity of Edinburgh, a seat of the Keiths of Dunnotar, nearly related to Mrs. Scott, and to herself. With some of that family she spent an evening at George's Square. She chanced to be writing next day to Dr. Douglas, the well-known and much respected minister of her native parish, Galashiels; and her letter, of which the doctor's son has kindly given me a copy, contains the following passage:—

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* Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xx. p. 154.

"Edinburgh, Saturday night, 15th of the gloomy month when the people of England hang and drown themselves.

* * * * "I last night supped in Mr. Walter Scott's. He has the most extraordinary genius of a boy I ever saw. He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on; it was the description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm. He lifted his eyes and hands. 'There's the mast gone,' says he; 'crash it goes!—they will all perish!' After his agitation, he turns to me. 'That is too melancholy,' says he; 'I had better read you something more amusing.' I preferred a little chat, and asked his opinion of Milton and other books he was reading, which he gave me wonderfully. One of his observations was, 'How strange it is that Adam, just new come into the world, should know every thing—that must be the poet's fancy,' says he. But when he was told he was created perfect by God, he instantly yielded. When taken to bed last night, he told his aunt he liked that lady. 'What lady?' says she. 'Why, Mrs. Cockburn; for I think she is a virtuoso, like myself.' 'Dear Walter,' says aunt Jenny, 'what is a virtuoso?' 'Don't ye know? Why, it's one who wishes and will know every thing.'*—Now, sir, you will think

this a very silly story. Pray, what age do you suppose this boy to be? Name it now, before I tell you. Why, twelve or fourteen. No such thing; he is not quite six years old.[*] He has a lame leg, for which he was a year at Bath, and has acquired the perfect English accent, which he has not lost since he came, and he reads like a Garrick. You will allow this an uncommon exotic."

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* It may amuse my reader to recall, by the side of Scott's early definition of "a Virtuoso," the lines in which Akenside has painted that character—lines which might have been written for a description of the Author of Waverley:—

"He knew the various modes of ancient times,
Their arts and fashions of each various guise;
Their weddings, funerals, punishments of crimes;
Their strength, their learning eke, and rarities.

Some particulars in Mrs. Cockburn's account appear considerably at variance with what Sir Walter has told us respecting his own boyish proficiency—especially in the article of pronunciation. On that last head, however, Mrs. Cockburn was not, probably, a very accurate judge: all that can be said is, that if at this early period he had acquired any thing which could be justly described as an English accent, he soon lost, and never again recovered, what he had thus gained from his short residence in Bath. In after life his pronunciation of words, considered separately, was seldom much different from that of a well-educated Englishman of his time; but he used many words in a sense which belonged to Scotland not to England, and the tone and accent remained broadly Scotch, though, unless in the *burr*, which no doubt smacked of the country bordering on Northumberland, there was no *provincial* peculiarity about his utterance. He had strong powers of mimicry—could talk with a peasant quite in his own style, and frequently in general society introduced rustic *patois*, northern, southern or midland, with great truth and effect; but these things were inlaid dramatically, or playfully, upon his narrative. His exquisite taste in this matter was not less remarkable in his conversation than in the prose of his Scotch novels.

Another lady, nearly connected with the Keiths of Ravelstone, has a lively recollection of young Walter, when paying a visit much about the same period to his kind relation,[†] the mistress of that picturesque old mansion, which furnished him in after days with many of the features of his Tully-Veolan, and whose venerable gardens, with their massive hedges of yew and holly, he always considered as the ideal of the art. The lady, whose letter I have now before me, says she distinctly remembers the sickly boy sitting at the gate of the house with his attendant, when a poor mendicant approached, old and woebegone, to claim the charity which none asked for in vain at Ravelstone. When the man was retiring, the servant remarked to Walter that he ought to be thankful to Providence for having placed him above the want and misery he had been contemplating. 'The child looked up with a half wistful, half incredulous expression,'—and said *Homer was a beggar!* How do you know that? said the other—Why, don't you remember, answered the little Virtuoso,—that

'Seven *Roman* cities strove for Homer dead,
Through which the living Homer begged his bread?'

Of old habiliment, each sort and size.
Male, female, high and low, to him were known;
Each gladiator's dress, and stage-disguise,
With learned clerkly phrase he could have shown."

[*] He was, in fact, six years and three months old before this letter was written.

[†] Mrs. Keith of Ravelstone was born a Swinton of Swinton, and sister to Sir Walter's maternal grandmother.

The lady smiled at the '*Roman* cities,'—but already

'Each blank in faithless memory void
The poet's glowing thought supplied.

It was in this same year, 1777, that he spent some time at Prestonpans; made his first acquaintance with George Constable, the original of his Monkbarns; explored the field where Colonel Gardiner received his death-wound, under the learned guidance of Dalgetty; and marked the spot 'where tne grass grew long and green, distinguishing it from the rest of the field,'* above the grave of poor Balmawhapple.

His uncle Thomas, whom I have described as I saw him in extreme old age at Monklaw, had the management of the farm affairs at Sandy-Knowe, when Walter returned thither from Prestonpans; he was a kindhearted man, and very fond of the child. Appearing on his return somewhat strengthened, his uncle promoted him from the Cow-bailie's shoulder to a dwarf of the Shetland race, not so large as many a Newfoundland dog. This creature walked freely into the house, and was regularly fed from the boy's hand. He soon learned to sit her well, and often alarmed aunt Jenny, by cantering over the rough places about the tower. In the evening of his life, when he had a grandchild afflicted with an infirmity akin to his own, he provided her with a little mare of the same breed, and gave her the name of *Marion*, in memory of this early favourite.

CHAPTER III.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY CONTINUED—HIGH SCHOOL OF EDINBURGH—RESIDENCE AT KELSO—1778-1783.

The report of Walter's progress in horsemanship probably reminded his father that it was time he should be learning other things beyond the department either of aunt Jenny or uncle Thomas, and after a few months he was recalled to Edinburgh. But extraordinary as was the progress he had by this time made in that self-education, which alone is of primary consequence to spirits of his order, he was found too deficient in lesser matters to be at once entered in the High School. Probably his mother dreaded, and deferred as long as she could, the day when he should be exposed to the rude collision of a crowd of boys. At all events he was placed first in a little private school kept by one Leechman in Bristo-port; and then, that experiment not answering expectation, under the domestic tutorage of Mr. James French, afterwards minister of East Kilbride in Lanarkshire. This respectable man grounded him in the Latin grammar, and considered him fit to join Luke Fraser's second class in October 1779.

His own account of his progress at this excellent seminary is, on the whole, very similar to what I have received from some of his surviving school-fellows. His quick apprehension and powerful memory enabled him, at little cost of labour, to perform the usual routine of tasks, in such a manner as to keep him generally "in a decent place" (so he once expressed it to Mr. Skene) "about the middle of the class; with which," he continued, "I was the better contented, that it chanced to be near the fire."* Mr. Fraser was, I believe, more zealous in enforcing attention to the technicalities of grammar, than to excite curiosity about historical facts, or imagination to strain after the flights of a poet. There is no evidence that Scott, though he speaks of him as his "kind master," in remembrance probably of sympathy for his physical infirmities, ever attracted his special notice with reference to scholarship; but Adam, the rector, into whose class he passed in October, 1782, was, as his situation demanded, a teacher of a more liberal caste, and though never, even under his guidance, did Walter fix and concentrate his ambition so as to maintain an eminent place, still the vivacity of his talents was observed, and the readiness of his memory in particular was so often displayed, that (as Mr. Irving, his chosen friend of that day, informs me), the doctor "would constantly refer to him for dates, the particulars of battles, and other remarkable events alluded to in Horace, or whatever author the boys were reading, and used to call him the historian of the class." No one who has read, as few have not, Dr. Adam's interesting work on Roman Antiquities, will doubt the author's capacity for stimulating such a mind as young Scott's.

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* Waverley, vol. ii. p. 175.

He speaks of himself as occasionally "glancing like a meteor from the bottom to the top of the form." His school-fellow, Mr. Claud Russell, remembers that he once made a great leap in consequence of the stupidity of some laggard on what is called the *dult's* (dolt's) bench, who being asked, on boggling at *cum*, "what part of speech is *with?*" answered, "*a substantive.*" The rector, after a moment's pause, thought it worth while to ask his *dux*—"Is *with* ever a substantive?" but all were silent until the query reached Scott, then near the bottom of the class, who instantly responded by quoting a verse of the book of Judges:—"And Sampson said unto Delilah, If they bind me with seven green *withs* that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and as another man."† Another upward movement, accomplished in a less laudable manner, but still one strikingly illustrative of his ingenious resources, I am enabled to preserve through the kindness of a brother poet and esteemed friend, to whom Sir Walter himself communicated it in the melancholy twilight of his bright day.

Mr. Roger says—"Sitting one day alone with him in your house, in the Regent's Park—(it was the day but one before he left it to embark at Portsmouth for Malta)—I led him, among other things, to tell me once again a story of himself, which he had formerly told me, and which I had often wished to recover. When I returned home, I wrote it down as nearly as I could, in his own words; and here they are. The subject is an achievement worthy of Ulysses himself, and such as many of his school-fellows could, no doubt, have related of him; but

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* According to Mr. Irving's recollection, Scott's place, after the first winter, was usually between the 7th and the 15th from the top of the class. He adds, "Dr. James Buchan was always the *dux; *David Douglas (Lord Reston) *second;* and the present Lord Melville *third.*"

† Chap. xvi. v. 7.

I fear I have done it no justice, though the story is so very characteristic that it should not be lost. The inimitable manner in which he told it—the glance of the eye, the turn of the head, and the light that played over his faded features as, one by one, the circumstances came back to him, accompanied by a thousand boyish feelings, that had slept perhaps for years—there is no language, not even his own, could convey to you; but you can supply them. Would that others could do so, who had not the good fortune to know him!—The memorandum (Friday, October 21, 1831) is as follows:—

"There was a boy in my class at school, who stood always at the top,* nor could I with all my efforts supplant him. Day came after day, and still he kept his place, do what I would; till at length I observed that, when a question was asked him, he always fumbled with his fingers at a particular button in the lower part of his waistcoat. To remove it, therefore, became expedient in my eyes; and in an evil moment it was removed with a knife. Great was my anxiety to know the success of my measure; and it succeeded too well. When the boy was again questioned, his fingers sought again for the button, but it was not to be found. In his distress he looked down for it; it was to be seen no more than to be felt. He stood confounded, and I took possession of his place; nor did he ever recover it, or ever, I believe, suspect who was the author of his wrong. Often in after-life has the sight of him smote me as I passed by him; and often have I resolved to make him some reparation; but it ended in good resolutions. Though I never renewed my acquaintance with him, I often saw him, for he filled some inferior office in one of the courts of law at Edinburgh. Poor fellow! I believe he is dead; he took early to drinking."

The autobiography tells us that his translations in verse from Horace and Virgil were often approved by Dr. Adam. One of these little pieces, written in a weak boyish scrawl, within pencilled marks still visible, had been carefully preserved by his mother; it was found folded up in a cover inscribed by the old lady—"*My Walter's first lines*, 1782."

"In awful ruins Ætna thunders nigh,
And sends in pitchy whirlwinds to the sky
Black clouds of smoke, which, still as they aspire,
From their dark sides there bursts the glowing fire;
At other times huge balls of fire are toss'd,
That lick the stars, and in the smoke are lost:
Sometimes the mount, with vast convulsions torn,
Emits huge rocks, which instantly are borne
With loud explosions to the starry skies,
The stones made liquid as the huge mass flies,
Then back again with greater weight recoils,
While Ætna thundering from the bottom boils."

I gather from Mr. Irving that these lines were considered as the second best set of those produced on the occasion—Colin Mackenzie of Portmore, through life Scott's dear friend, carrying off the premium.

In his Introduction to the "Lay," he alludes to an original effusion of these "schoolboy days," prompted by a thunder-storm, which he says, "was much approved of, until a malevolent critic sprung up in the shape of an apothecary's blue-buskined wife, who affirmed that my most sweet poetry was copied from an old magazine. I never" (he continues) "forgave the imputation, and even now I aknowledge some resentment against the poor woman's memory. She indeed accused me unjustly, when she said I had stolen my poem ready made; but as I had, like most premature poets, copied all the words and ideas of which my verses consisted, she was so far right. I made one or two faint attempts at verse after I had undergone this sort of daw-plucking at the hands of the apothecary's wife, but some friend or other always advised me to put my verses into the fire; and, like Dorax in the play, I submitted, though with a swelling heart." These lines, and another short piece "on the Setting Sun," were lately found wrapped up in a cover, inscribed by Dr. Adam, "Walter Scott, July, 1783," and have been kindly transmitted to me by the gentleman who discovered them.

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* Mr. Irving inclines to think that this incident must have occurred during Scott's attendance on Luke Fraser, not after he went to Dr. Adam; and he also suspects that the boy referred to sat at the top not of the *class*, but of Scott's own bench or division of the class.

"*On a Thunder-storm.*

"Loud o'er my head though awful thunders roll,
And vivid lightnings flash from pole to pole,
Yet 't is thy voice, my God, that bids them fly,
Thy arm directs those lightnings through the sky.
Then let the good thy mighty name revere,
And hardened sinners thy just vengeance fear."

"*On the Setting Sun.*

"Those evening clouds, that setting ray
And beauteous tints, serve to display
Their great Creator's praise;
Then let the short-lived thing called man,
Whose life comprised within a span,
To Him his homage raise.

"We often praise the evening clouds
And tints so gay and bold,
But seldom think upon our God,
Who tinged these clouds with gold!"[*]

It must, I think, be allowed that these lines, though of the class to which the poet himself modestly ascribes them, and not to be compared with the efforts of Pope, still less of Cowley at the same period, show, nevertheless, praiseworthy dexterity for a boy of twelve.

The fragment tells us, that on the whole he was "more distinguished in *the Yards* (as the High School playground was called), than in *the class;*" and this, not less than the intellectual advancement which years before had excited the admiration of Mrs. Cockburn, was the natural result of his lifelong "rebellion against external circumstances." He might now with very slender exertion have been the *dux* of his form, but if there was more difficulty, there was also more to whet his ambition, in the attempt to overcome the disadvantages of his physical misfortune, and in spite of them assert equality with the best of his compeers on the ground which they considered as the true arena of honour. He told me, in walking through these same *yards* forty years afterwards, that he had scarcely made his first appearance there, before some dispute arising, his opponent remarked that "there was no use to harglebargle with a cripple;" upon which he replied, that if he might fight *mounted*, he would try his hand with any one of his inches. "An elder boy," (said he), "who had perhaps been chuckling over our friend Roderick Random when his mother supposed him to be in full cry after Pyrrhus or Porus, suggested that the two little tinklers might be lashed front to front upon a deal board—and—'O gran bonta de' cavalier antichi'—the proposal being forthwith agreed to, I received my first bloody nose in an attitude which would have entitled me, in the blessed days of personal cognizance, to assume that of a *lioncel seiant gules*. My pugilistic trophies here" (he continued) "were all the results of such *sittings in banco*." Considering his utter ignorance of fear, the strength of his chest and upper limbs, and that the scientific part of pugilism never flourished in Scotland, I daresay these trophies were not few.

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[*] I am obliged for these little memorials to the Rev. W. Steven of Rotterdam, author of an interesting book on the history of the branch of the Scotch Church long established in Holland, and still flourishing under the protection of the enlightened government of that country. Mr. Steven found them in the course of his recent researches, undertaken with a view to some memoirs of the High School of Edinburgh, at which he had received his own early education.

The mettle of the High-School boys, however, was principally displayed elsewhere than in their own *yards;* and Sir Walter has furnished us with ample indications of the delight with which he found himself at length capable of rivalling others in such achievements as required the exertion of active locomotive powers. Speaking of some scene of his infancy in one of his latest tales, he says: "Every step of the way after I have passed through the green already mentioned" (probably the *Meadows* behind George's Square), "has for me something of an early remembrance. There is the stile at which I can recollect a cross child's-maid upbraiding me with my infirmity as she lifted me coarsely and carelessly over the flinty steps which my brothers traversed with shout and bound. I remember the *suppressed bitterness* of the moment, and conscious of my own infirmity, the envy with which I regarded the easy movements and elastic steps of my more happily formed brethren. Alas!" (he adds), "these goodly barks have all perished in life's wide ocean, and only that which seemed, as the naval phrase goes, so little sea-worthy, has reached the port when the tempest is over." How touching to compare with this passage, that in which he records his pride in being found before he left the High School one of the boldest and nimblest climbers of "the kittle nine stanes," a passage of difficulty which might puzzle a chamois-hunter of the Alps, its steps "few and far between," projected high in air from the precipitous black granite of the Castle rock. But climbing and fighting could sometimes be combined, and he has in almost the same page dwelt upon perhaps the most favourite of all these juvenile exploits—namely, "the manning of the Cowgate Port,"—in the season when snowballs could be employed by the young scorners of discipline for the annoyance of the Townguard. To understand fully the feelings of a High-School boy of that day with regard to those ancient Highlanders, who then formed the only police of the city of Edinburgh, the reader must consult the poetry of the scapegrace Ferguson. It was in defiance of their Lochaber axes that the Cowgate Port was manned—and many were the occasions on which its defence presented at least a formidable mimicry of warfare. "The gateway," Sir Walter adds, "is now demolished, and probably most of its garrison lie as low as the fortress! To recollect that I, however naturally disqualified, was one of these juvenile dreadnoughts, is a sad reflection for one who cannot now step over a brook without assistance."

I am unwilling to swell this narrative by extracts from Scott's published works, but there is one juvenile exploit told in the General Preface to the Waverley Novels which I must crave leave to introduce here in his own language, because it is essentially necessary to complete our notion of his schoolboy life and character. "It is well known" (he says) "that there is little boxing at the Scottish schools. About forty or fifty years ago, however, a far more dangerous mode of fighting, in parties or factions, was permitted in the streets of Edinburgh, to the great disgrace of the police, and danger of the parties concerned. These parties were generally formed from the quarters of the town in which the combatants resided, those of a particular square or district fighting against those of an adjoining one. Hence it happened that the children of the higher classes were often pitted against those of the lower, each taking their side according to the residence of their friends. So far as I recollect, however, it was unmingled either with feelings of democracy or aristocracy, or indeed with malice or ill-will of any kind towards the opposite party. In fact, it was only a rough mode of play. Such contests were, however, maintained with great vigour with stones, and sticks, and fisticuffs, when one party dared to charge and the other stood their ground. Of course mischief sometimes happened; boys are said to have been killed at these *Bickers*, as they were called, and serious accidents certainly took place, as many contemporaries can bear witness.

"The author's father, residing in George's Square, in the southern side of Edinburgh, the boys belonging to that family, with others in the square, were arranged into a sort of company, to which a lady of distinction presented a handsome set of colours.* Now, this company or regiment, as a matter of course, was engaged in weekly warfare with the boys inhabiting the Crosscauseway, Bristo-Street, the Potterrow,—in short, the neighbouring suburbs. These last were chiefly of the lower rank, but hardy loons, who threw stones to a hair's-breadth, and were very rugged antagonists at close quarters. The skirmish sometimes lasted for a whole evening, until one party or the other was victorious, when, if ours were successful, we drove the enemy to their quarters, and were usually chased back by the reinforcement of bigger lads who came to their assistance. If, on the contrary, we were pursued, as was often the case, into the precincts of our square, we were in our turn supported by our elder brothers, domestic servants, and similar auxiliaries. It followed, from our frequent opposition to each other, that, though not knowing the names of our enemies, we were yet well acquainted with their appearance, and had nicknames for the most remarkable of them. One very active and spirited boy might be considered as the principal leader in the cohort of the suburbs. He was, I suppose, thirteen or fourteen years old, finely made, tall, blue-eyed, with long fair hair, the very picture of a youthful Goth. This lad was always first in the charge, and last in the retreat—the Achilles at once and Ajax of the Crosscauseway. He was too formidable to us not to have a cognomen, and, like that of a knight of old, it was taken from the most remarkable part of his dress, being a pair of old green livery breeches, which was the principal part of his clothing; for, like Pentapolin, according to Don Quixote's account, Green-breeks, as we called him, always entered the battle with bare arms, legs, and feet.

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* This young patroness was the present Countess-Duchess of Sutherland.

"It fell, that once upon a time when the combat was at the thickest, this plebeian champion headed a charge so rapid and furious, that all fled before him. He was several paces before his comrades, and had actually laid his hands upon the patrician standard, when one of our party, whom some misjudging friend had intrusted with a *couteau de chasse*, or hanger, inspired with a zeal for the honour of the corps, worthy of Major Sturgeon himself, struck poor Green-breeks over the head, with strength sufficient to cut him down. When this was seen, the casualty was so far beyond what had ever taken place before, that both parties fled different ways, leaving poor Green-breeks, with his bright hair plentifully dabbled in blood, to the care of the watchman, who (honest man) took care not to know who had done the mischief. The bloody hanger was thrown into one of the Meadow ditches, and solemn secrecy was sworn on all hands; but the remorse and terror of the actor were beyond all bounds, and his apprehensions of the most dreadful character. The wounded hero was for a few days in the Infirmary, the case being only a trifling one. But though enquiry was strongly pressed on him, no argument could make him indicate the person from whom he had received the wound, though he must have been perfectly well known to him. When he recovered, and was dismissed, the author and his brothers opened a communication with him, through the medium of a popular gingerbread baker, of whom both parties were customers, in order to tender a subsidy in the name of smart-money. The sum would excite ridicule were I to name it; but sure I am, that the pockets of the noted Green-breeks never held as much money of his own. He declined the remittance, saying that he would not sell his blood; but at the same time reprobated the idea of being an informer, which he said was *clan*, i. e. base or mean. With much urgency, he accepted a pound of snuff for the use of some old woman—aunt, grandmother, or the like—with whom he lived. We did not become friends, for the *bickers* were more agreeable to both parties than any more pacific amusement; but we conducted them ever after, under mutual assurances of the highest consideration for each other." Sir Walter adds:—"Of five brothers, all healthy and promising in a degree far beyond one whose infancy was visited by personal infirmity, and whose health after this period seemed long very precarious, I am, nevertheless, the only survivor. The best loved, and the best deserving to be loved, who had destined this incident to be the foundation of a literary composition, died "before his day," in a distant and foreign land; and trifles assume an importance not their own, when connected with those who have been loved and lost."

During some part of his attendance on the High School, young

Walter spent one hour daily at a small separate seminary of writing and arithmetic, kept by one Morton, where, as was, and I suppose continues to be, the custom of Edinburgh, young girls came for instruction as well as boys; and one of Mr. Morton's female pupils has been kind enough to set down some little reminiscences of Scott, who happened to sit at the same desk with herself. They appear to me the more interesting, because the lady had no acquaintance with him in the course of his subsequent life. Her nephew Mr. James (the accomplished author of Richelieu), to whose friendship I owe her communication, assures me too, that he had constantly heard her tell the same things in the very same way, as far back as his own memory reaches, many years before he had ever seen Sir Walter, or his aunt could have dreamt of surviving to assist in the biography of his early days.

"He attracted," Mrs. Churnside says, "the regard and fondness of all his companions, for he was ever rational, fanciful, lively, and possessed of that urbane gentleness of manner, which makes its way to the heart. His imagination was constantly at work, and he often so engrossed the attention of those who learnt with him, that little could be done—Mr. Morton himself being forced to laugh as much as the little scholars at the odd turns and devices he fell upon; for he did nothing in the ordinary way, but, for example, even when he wanted ink to his pen, would get up some ludicrous story about sending his doggie to the mill again. He used also to interest us in a more serious way, by telling us the *visions* as he called them, which he had lying alone on the floor or sofa, when kept from going to church on a Sunday by ill health. Child as I was, I could not help being highly delighted with his description of the glories he had seen—his misty and sublime sketches of the regions above, which he had visited in his trance. Recollecting these descriptions, radiant and not gloomy as they were, I have often thought since, that there must have been a bias in his mind to superstition—the marvellous seemed to have such power over him, though the mere offspring of his own imagination, that the expression of his face, habitually that of genuine benevolence, mingled with a shrewd innocent humour, changed greatly while he was speaking of these things, and showed a deep intenseness of feeling, as if he were awed even by his own recital. . . . I may add, that in walking he used always to keep his eyes turned downwards as if thinking, but with a pleasing expression of countenance, as if enjoying his thoughts. Having once known him, it was impossible ever to forget him. In this manner, after all the changes of a long life, he constantly appears as fresh as yesterday to my mind's eye."

This beautiful extract needs no commentary. I may as well, however, bear witness, that exactly as the school-boy still walks before "her mind's eye," his image rises familiarly to mine, who never saw him until he was past the middle of life: that I trace in every feature of her delineation, the same gentleness of aspect and demeanour which the presence of the female sex, whether in silk or in russet, ever commanded in the man; and that her description of the change on his countenance when passing from the "doggie of the mill," to the dream of Paradise, is a perfect picture of what no one that has heard him recite a fragment of high poetry, in the course of table-talk, can ever forget. Strangers may catch some notion of what fondly dwells on the memory of every friend, by glancing from the conversational bust of Chantrey, to the first portrait by Raeburn, which represents the Last Minstrel as musing in his prime within sight of Hermitage.*

I believe it was about this time that, as he expresses it in one of his latest works, "the first images of horror from the scenes of real life were stamped upon his mind," by the tragical death of his great-aunt Mrs. Margaret Swinton. This old lady, whose extraordinary nerve of character he illustrates largely in the introduction to the story of Aunt Margaret's Mirror, was now living with one female attendant, in a small house not far from Mr. Scott's residence in George's Square. The maid-servant, in a sudden access of insanity, struck her mistress to death with a coal-axe, and then rushed furiously into the street with the bloody weapon in her hand, proclaiming aloud the horror she had perpetrated. I need not dwell on the effects which must have been produced in a virtuous and affectionate circle by this shocking incident. The old lady had been tenderly attached to her nephew. "She was" (he says) "our constant resource in sickness, or when we tired of noisy play, and closed round her to listen to her tales."

It was at this same period that Mr. and Mrs. Scott received into their house, as tutor for their children, Mr. James Mitchell, of whom the Ashestiel Memoir gives us a description, such as I could not have presented had he been still alive. Mr. Mitchell was still living, however, at the time of his pupil's death, and I am now not only at liberty to present Scott's unmutilated account of their intercourse, but enabled to give also the most simple and characteristic narrative of the other party. I am sure no one, however nearly related to Mr. Mitchell, will now complain of seeing his keen-sighted pupil's sketch placed by the side, as it were, of the fuller portraiture drawn by the unconscious hand of the amiable and worthy man himself. The following is an extract from Mr. Mitchell's MS., entitled "Memorials of the most remarkable occurrences and transactions of my life, drawn up in the hope that, when I shall be no more, they may be read with profit and pleasure by my children." The good man was so kind as to copy out one chapter for my use, as soon as he heard of Sir Walter Scott's death. He was then, and had for many years been, minister of a Presbyterian chapel at Wooler, in Northumberland, to which situation he had retired on losing his benefice at Montrose, in consequence of the Sabbatarian scruples alluded to in Scott's Autobiography.

"In 1782," says Mr. Mitchell, "I became a tutor in Mr. Walter Scott's family. He was a Writer to the Signet, in George's Square, Edinburgh. Mr. Scott was a fine looking man, then a little past the meridian of life, of dignified, yet agreeable manners. His business was extensive. He was a man of tried integrity, of strict morals, and had a respect for religion and its ordinances. The church the family attended was the Old Grey Friars, of which the celebrated Doctors Robertson and Erskine were the ministers. Thither went

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* The Duke of Buccleuch, who now possesses this admirable portrait, has kindly permitted it to be re-engraved for the illustration of the present volume.

Mr. and Mrs. Scott every Sabbath, when well and at home, attended by their fine young family of children, and their domestic servants—a sight so amiable and exemplary as often to excite in my breast a glow of heartfelt satisfaction. According to an established and laudable practice in the family, the heads of it, the children, and servants were assembled on Sunday evenings in the drawing-room, and examined on the Church catechism and sermons they had heard delivered during the course of the day; on which occasions I had to perform the part of chaplain, and conclude with prayer. From Mrs. Scott I learned that Mr. Scott was one that had not been seduced from the paths of virtue; but had been enabled to venerate good morals from his youth. When he first came to Edinburgh to follow out his profession, some of his schoolfellows, who, like him, had come to reside in Edinburgh, attempted to unhinge his principles, and corrupt his morals; but when they found him resolute, and unshaken in his virtuous dispositions, they gave up the attempt; but, instead of abandoning him altogether, they thought the more of him, and honoured him with their confidence and patronage; which is certainly a great inducement to young men in the outset of life to act a similar part.

"After having heard of his inflexible adherence to the cause of virtue in his youth, and his regular attendance on the ordinances of religion in after-life, we will not be surprised to be told that he bore a sacred regard for the Sabbath, nor at the following anecdote illustrative of it. An opulent farmer of East Lothian had employed Mr. Scott as his agent, in a cause depending before the Court of Session. Having a curiosity to see something in the papers relative to the process, which were deposited in Mr. Scott's hands, this worldly man came into Edinburgh on a Sunday to have an inspection of them. As there was no immediate necessity for this measure, Mr. Scott asked the farmer if an ordinary week-day would not answer equally well. The farmer was not willing to take this advice, but insisted on the production of his papers. Mr. Scott then delivered them up to him, saying, it was not his practice to engage in secular business on Sabbath, and that he would have no difficulty in Edinburgh to find some of his profession who would have none of his scruples. No wonder such a man was confided in, and greatly honoured in his professional line.—All the poor services I did to his family were more than repaid by the comfort and honour I had by being in the family, the pecuniary remuneration I received, and particularly by his recommendation of me, sometime afterwards, to the Magistrates and Town-Council of Montrose, when there was a vacancy, and this brought me on the carpet, which, as he said, was all he could do, as the settlement would ultimately hinge on a popular election.

"Mrs. Scott was a wife in every respect worthy of such a husband. Like her partner, she was then a little past the meridian of life, of a prepossessing appearance, amiable manners, of a cultivated understanding, affectionate disposition, and fine taste. She was both able and disposed to soothe her husband's mind under the asperities of business, and to be a rich blessing to her numerous progeny. But what constituted her distinguishing ornament was, that she was sincerely religious. Some years previous to my entrance into the family, I understood from one of the servants she had been under deep religious concern about her soul's salvation, which had ultimately issued in a conviction of the truth of Christianity, and in the enjoyment of its divine consolations. She liked Dr. Erskine's sermons; but was not fond of the Principal's, however rational, eloquent, and well composed, and would, if other things had answered, have gone, when he preached, to have heard Dr. Davidson. Mrs. Scott was a descendant of Dr. Daniel Rutherford, a professor in the Medical School of Edinburgh, and one of those eminent men, who, by learning and professional skill, brought it to the high pitch of celebrity to which it has attained. He was an excellent linguist, and according to the custom of the times, delivered his prelections to the students in Latin. Mrs. Scott told me, that, when prescribing to his patients, it was his custom to offer up at the same time a prayer for the accompanying blessing of heaven; a laudable practice, in which, I fear, he has not been generally imitated by those of his profession.

"Mr. Scott's family consisted of six children, all of which were at home except the eldest, who was an officer in the army; and as they were of an age fit for instruction, they were all committed to my superintendence, which, in dependence on God, I exercised with an earnest and faithful regard to their temporal and spiritual good. As the most of them were under public teachers, the duty assigned me was mainly to assist them in the prosecution of their studies. In all the excellencies, whether as to temper, conduct, talents natural or acquired, which any of the children individually possessed, to Master Walter, since the celebrated Sir Walter, must the preference be ascribed. Though, like the rest of the children, placed under my tuition, the conducting of his education comparatively cost me but little trouble, being, by the quickness of his intellect, tenacity of memory, and diligent application to his studies, generally equal of himself to the acquisition of those tasks I or others prescribed to him. So that Master Walter might be regarded not so much as a pupil of mine, but as a friend and companion, and I may add, as an assistant also; for, by his example and admonitions, he greatly strengthened my hands, and stimulated my other pupils to industry and good behaviour. I seldom had occasion all the time I was in the family to find fault with him even for trifles, and only once to threaten serious castigation, of which he was no sooner aware than he suddenly sprung up, threw his arms about my neck, and kissed me. It is hardly needful to state, that now, the intended castigation was no longer thought of. By such generous and noble conduct my displeasure was in a moment converted into esteem and admiration; my soul melted into tenderness, and I was ready to mingle my tears with his. Some incidents in reference to him in that early period, and some interesting and useful conversations I had with him, then deeply impressed on my mind, and which the lapse of near half a century has not yet obliterated, afforded no doubtful presage of his future greatness and celebrity. On my going into the family, as far as I can judge, he might be in his twelfth or thirteenth year, a boy in the Rector's class. However elevated above the other boys in genius, though generally in the list of the duxes, he was seldom, as far as I recollect, the leader of the school: nor need this be deemed surprising, as it has often been observed, that boys of original genius have been outstripped by those that were far inferior to themselves, in the acquisition of the dead languages. Dr. Adam, the rector, celebrated for his knowledge of the Latin language, was deservedly held by Mr. Walter in high admiration and regard; of which the following anecdote may be adduced as a proof. In the High School, as is well known, there are four masters and a rector. The classes of those masters the rector in rotation inspects, and in the mean time the master, whose school is examined, goes in to take care of the rector's. One of the masters, on account of some grudge, had rudely assaulted and injured the venerable rector one night in the High School Wynd. The rector's scholars, exasperated at the outrage, at the instigation of Master Walter, determined on revenge, and which was to be executed when this obnoxious master should again come to teach the class. When this occurred, the task the class had prescribed to them was that passage in the Æneid of Virgil, where the Queen of Carthage interrogates the court as to the stranger that had come to her habitation—

'Quis novus hic hospes succcssit sedibus nostris?'[*]

Master Walter having taken a piece of paper, inscribed upon it these words, substituting *vanus* for *novus*, and pinned it to the tail of the master's coat, and turned him into ridicule by raising the laugh of the whole school against him. Though this juvenile action could not be justified on the footing of Christian principles, yet certainly it was so far honourable that it was not a dictate of personal revenge; but that it originated in respect for a worthy and injured man, and detestation of one whom he looked upon as a bad character.

"One forenoon, on coming from the High School, he said he wished to know my opinion as to his conduct in a matter he should state to me. When passing through the High School Yards, he found a half-guinea piece on the ground. Instead of appropriating this to his own use, a sense of honesty led him to look around, and on doing so he espied a countryman, whom he suspected to be the proprietor. Having asked the man if he had lost any thing, he searched his pockets, and then replied that he had lost half-a-guinea. Master Walter with pleasure presented him with his lost treasure. In this transaction, his ingenuity in finding out the proper owner, and his integrity in restoring the property, met my most cordial approbation.

"When in church, Master Walter had more of a soporific tendency than the rest of my young charge. This seemed to be constitutional. He needed one or other of the family to arouse him, and from this it might be inferred that he would cut a poor figure on the Sabbath evening when examined about the sermons. But what excited the admiration of the family was, that none of the children, however wakeful, could answer as he did. The only way that I could account for this was, that when he heard the text, and divisions of the subject, his good sense, memory, and genius supplied the thoughts which would occur to the preacher.

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[*] This transposition of *hospes* and *nostris* sufficiently confirms his pupil's statement that Mr. Mitchell "superintended his classical themes, but not classically." The "obnoxious master" alluded to was Burns's friend Nicoll, the hero of the song—

"Willie brewed a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan came to see," &c.

"On one occasion, in the dining-room, when, according to custom, he was reading some author in the time of relaxation from study, I asked him how he accounted for the superiority of knowledge he possessed above the rest of the family. His reply was—Some years ago he had been attacked by a swelling in one of his ankles, which confined him to the house, and prevented him taking amusement and exercise, and which was the cause of his lameness—as under this ailment he could not romp with his brothers and the other young people in the green in George's Square, he found himself compelled to have recourse to some substitute for the juvenile amusements of his comrades, and this was reading. So that, to what no doubt he accounted a painful dispensation of Providence, he probably stood indebted for his future celebrity. When it was understood I was to leave the family, Master Walter told me that he had a small present to give me to be kept as a memorandum of his friendship, and that it was of little value; 'But you know, Mr. Mitchell,' said he, 'that presents are not to be estimated according to their intrinsic value, but according to the intention of the donor.' This was his Adam's grammar, which had seen hard service in its day, and had many animals and inscriptions on its margins. This, to my regret, is no longer to be found in my collection of books, nor do I know what has become of it.

"Since leaving the family, although no stranger to the widely-spreading fame of Sir Walter, I have had few opportunities of personal intercourse with him. When minister in the second charge of the Established Church at Montrose, he paid me a visit, and spent a night with me—few visits have been more gratifying. He was then on his return from Aberdeen, where he, as an advocate, had attended the Court of Justiciary in its northern circuit. Nor was his attendance in this court his sole object; another, and perhaps the principal, was, as he stated to me, to collect in his excursion ancient ballads and traditional stories about fairies, witches, and ghosts. Such intelligence proved to me as an electrical shock; and as I then sincerely regretted, so do I still, that Sir Walter's precious time was so much devoted to the *dulce*, rather than the *utile* of composition, and that his great talent should have been wasted on such subjects. At the same time I feel happy to qualify this censure, as I am generally given to understand that his Novels are of a more pure and unexceptionable nature than characteristic writings of a similar description; while at the same time his pen has been occupied in the production of works of a better and nobler order. Impressed with the conviction that he would one day arrive at honour and influence in his native country, I endeavoured to improve the occasion of his visit to secure his patronage in behalf of the strict and evangelical party in the Church of Scotland, in exerting himself to induce patrons to grant to the Christian people liberty to elect their own pastors in cases of vacancy. His answer struck me much—it was: 'Nay, nay, Mr. Mitchell, I'll not do that; for if that were to be done, I and the like of me would have no life with such as you;' from which I inferred he thought that, were the evangelical clergy to obtain the superiority, they would introduce such strictness of discipline as would not quadrate with the ideas of that party called *the moderate* in the Church of Scotland, whose views, I presume, Sir Walter had now adopted. Some, however, to whom I have mentioned Sir Walter's reply, have suggested that I had misunderstood his meaning, and that what he said was not in earnest, but in jocularity and good-humour. This may be true, and certainly is a candid interpretation. As to the ideal beings already mentioned as the subject of his enquiries, my materials were too scanty to afford him much information."

Notwithstanding the rigidly Presbyterian habits which this chronicle describes with so much more satisfaction than the corresponding page in the Ashestiel Memoir, I am reminded, by a communication already quoted from a lady of the Ravelstone family, that Mrs. Scott, who had, she says, "a turn for literature quite uncommon among the ladies of the time," encouraged her son in his passion for Shakspeare—that his plays, and the Arabian Nights, were often read aloud in the family circle by Walter, "and served to spend many a happy evening hour"—nay, that, however good Mitchell may have frowned at such a suggestion, even Mr. Scott made little objection to his children, and some of their young friends, getting up private theatricals occasionally in the dining-room, after the lessons of the day were over. The lady adds, that Walter was always the manager, and had the whole charge of the affair, and that the favourite piece used to be Jane Shore, in which he was the Hastings, his sister the Alicia. I have heard from another friend of the family, that Richard III. also was attempted, and that Walter took the part of the Duke of Gloucester, observing that "the limp would do well enough to represent the hump."

A story which I have seen in print, about his partaking in the dancing lessons of his brothers, I do not believe. But it was during Mr. Mitchell's residence in the family that they all made their unsuccessful attempts in the art of music, under the auspices of poor *Elshender* Campbell—the Editor of "Albyn's Anthology."

Mr. Mitchell appears to have terminated his superintendence before Walter left Dr. Adam; and in the interval between this and his entrance at College, he spent some time with his aunt, who now inhabited a cottage at Kelso; but the Memoir, I suspect, gives too much extension to that residence—which may be accounted for by his blending with it a similar visit which he paid to the same place during his College vacation of the next year.

Some of the features of Miss Jenny's abode at Kelso are alluded to in the Memoir, but the fullest description of it occurs in his "Essay on Landscape Gardening" (1828), where, talking of grounds laid out in the *Dutch taste*, he says:—"Their rarity *now* entitles them to some care as a species of antiques, and unquestionably they give character to some snug, quiet, and sequestered situations, which would otherwise have no marked feature of any kind. I retain an early and pleasing recollection of the seclusion of such a scene. A small cottage, adjacent to a beautiful village, the habitation of an ancient maiden lady, was for some time my abode. It was situated in a garden of seven or eight acres, planted about the beginning of the eighteenth century, by one of the Millars related to the author of the "Gardener's Dictionary," or, for aught I know, by himself. It was full of long straight walks, between hedges of yew and hornbeam, which rose tall and close on every side. There were thickets of flowery shrubs, a bower, and an arbour, to which access was obtained through a little maze of contorted walks calling itself a labyrinth. In the centre of the bower was a splendid platanus, or Oriental plane—a huge hill of leaves—one of the noblest specimens of that regularly beautiful tree which I remember to have seen. In different parts of the garden were fine ornamental trees, which had attained great size, and the orchard was filled with fruit trees of the best description. There were seats and hilly walks, and a banqueting house. I visited this scene lately, after an absence of many years. Its air of retreat, the seclusion which its alleys afforded, was entirely gone; the huge platanus had died, like most of its kind, in the beginning of this century; the hedges were cut down, the trees stubbed up, and the whole character of the place so destroyed, that I was glad when I could leave it." It was under this *Platanus* that Scott first devoured Percy's Reliques. I remember well being with him, in 1820 or 1821, when he revisited the favourite scene, and the sadness of his looks when he discovered that "the huge hill of leaves" was no more.

To keep up his scholarship while inhabiting *the garden*, he attended daily, as he informs us, the public school of Kelso, and here he made his first acquaintance with a family, two members of which were intimately connected with the most important literary transactions of his after life—James Ballantyne, the printer of almost all his works, and his brother John, who had a share in the publication of many of them. Their father was a respectable tradesman in this pretty town. The elder of the brothers, who did not long survive his illustrious friend, was kind enough to make an exertion on behalf of this work, while stretched on the bed from which he never rose, and dictated a valuable paper of *memoranda*, from which I shall here introduce my first extract:—

"I think" (says James Ballantyne) "it was in the year 1783, that I first became acquainted with Sir Walter Scott, then a boy about my own age, at the Grammar School of Kelso, of which Mr. Lancelot Whale was the Rector. The impression left by his manners was, even at that early period, calculated to be deep, and I cannot recall any other instance in which the man and the boy continued to resemble each other so much and so long. Walter Scott was not a constant school-fellow at this seminary; he only attended it for a few weeks during the vacation of the Edinburgh High School. He was then, as he continued during all his after life to be, devoted to antiquarian lore, and was certainly the best story-teller I had ever heard, either then or since. He soon discovered that I was as fond of listening as he himself was of relating; and I remember it was a thing of daily occurrence, that after he had made himself master of his own lesson, I, alas! being still sadly to seek in mine, he used to whisper to me, 'Come, slink over beside me, Jamie, and I'll tell you a story.' I well recollect that he had a form, or seat, appropriated to himself, the particular reason of which

I cannot tell, but he was always treated with a peculiar degree of respect, not by the boys of the different classes merely, but by the venerable Master Lancelot himself, who, an absent, grotesque being, betwixt six and seven feet high, was nevertheless an admirable scholar, and sure to be delighted to find any one so well qualified to sympathize with him as young Walter Scott; and the affectionate gratitude of the young pupil was never intermitted, so long as his venerable master continued to live. I may mention, in passing, that old Whale bore, in many particulars, a strong resemblance to Dominie Sampson, though, it must be admitted, combining more gentlemanly manners with equal classical lore, and, on the whole, being a much superior sort of person. In the intervals of school hours, it was our constant practice to walk together by the banks of the Tweed, our employment continuing exactly the same, for his stories seemed to be quite inexhaustible. This intercourse continued during the summers of the years 1783–4; but was broken off in 1785–6, when I went into Edinburgh to College.

Perhaps the separate seat assigned to Walter Scott, by the Kelso schoolmaster, was considered due to him as a temporary visiter from the great Edinburgh seminary. Very possibly, however, the worthy Mr. Whale thought of nothing but protecting his solitary student of Persius and Tacitus from the chances of being jostled among the adherents of Ruddiman and Cornelius Nepos.

Another of his Kelso schoolfellows was Robert Waldie (son of Mr. Waldie of Henderside), and to this connexion he owed, both while quartered in the Garden, and afterwards at Rosebank, many kind attentions, of which he ever preserved a grateful recollection, and which have left strong traces on every page of his works in which he has occasion to introduce the Society of Friends. This young companion's mother, though always called in the neighborhood "Lady Waldie," belonged to that community; and the style of life and manners depicted in the household of Joshua Geddes of Mount Saron and his amiable sister, in some of the sweetest chapters of Redgauntlet, is a slightly decorated edition of what he witnessed under her hospitable roof. He records, in a note to the Novel, the "liberality and benevolence" of this "kind old lady" in allowing him to "rummage at pleasure, and carry home any volumes he chose of her small but valuable library,"—annexing only the condition that he should "take at the same time some of the tracts printed for encouraging and extending the doctrines of her own sect.—She did not," he adds, "even exact any assurance that I would read these performances, being too justly afraid of involving me in a breach of promise, but was merely desirous that I should have the chance of instruction within my reach, in case whim, curiosity, or accident might induce me to have recourse to it." I remember the pleasure with which he read, late in life, Rome in the Nineteenth Century," an ingenious work produced by one of Mrs. Waldie's grand-daughters, and how comically he pictured the alarm with which his ancient friend would have perused some of its delineations of the high places of Popery.

I shall be pardoned for adding in this place a marginal note, written apparently late in Scott's life, on his copy of a little forgotten volume, entitled "Trifles in Verse, by a Young Soldier." "In 1783" (he says) "or about that time, I remember John Majoribanks, a smart recruiting officer in the village of Kelso, the Weekly Chronicle of which he filled with his love verses. His Delia was a Miss Dickson, daughter of a shopkeeper in the same village—his Gloriana a certain prudish old maiden lady, benempt Miss Goldie; I think I see her still, with her thin arms sheathed in scarlet gloves, and crossed like two lobsters in a fishmonger's stand. Poor Delia was a very beautiful girl, and not more conceited than a be-rhymed miss ought to be. Many years afterwards I found the Kelso *belle*, thin and pale, her good looks gone, and her smart dress neglected, governess to the brats of a Paisley manufacturer. I ought to say there was not an atom of scandal in her flirtation with the young military poet. The bard's fate was not much better; after some service in India, and elsewhere, he led a half-pay life about Edinburgh, and died there. There is a tenuity of thought in what he has written, but his verses are usually easy, and I like them because they recall my schoolboy days, when I thought him a Horace, and his Delia a goddess."

CHAPTER IV.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BIOGRAPHY CONTINUED—ANECDOTES OF SCOTT'S COLLEGE LIFE.—1783-1786.

On returning to Edinburgh, and entering the College, in November, 1783, Scott found himself once more in the fellowship of all his intimates of the High School; of whom, besides those mentioned in his autobiographical fragment, he speaks in his diaries with particular affection of Sir William Rae, Bart., David Monypenny, afterwards Lord Pitmilly, Thomas Todd, W. S., Sir Archibald Campbell of Succoth, Bart., all familiar friends of his through manhood,—and the present Earl of Dalhousie, whom, on meeting with him after a long separation in the evening of life, he records as still being, and having always been, "the same manly and generous character that all about him loved as the *Lordie Ramsay* of the Yards." His chosen intimate, however, continued to be for some time Mr. John Irving—his suburban walks with whom have been recollected so tenderly, both in the Memoir of 1808, and in the Preface to Waverley of 1829. It will interest the reader to compare, with those beautiful descriptions, the following extract from a letter with which Mr. Irving has favoured me:—

"Every Saturday, and more frequently during the vacations, we used to retire, with three or four books from the circulating library, to Salisbury Crags, Arthur's Seat, or Blackford Hill, and read them together. He read faster than I, and had, on this account, to wait a little at finishing every two pages, before turning the leaf. The books we most delighted in were romances of knight-errantry—the Castle of Otranto, Spenser, Ariosto, and Boiardo were great favourites. We used to climb up the rocks in search of places where we might sit sheltered from the wind; and the more inaccessible they were, the better we liked them. He was very expert at climbing. Sometimes we got into places where we found it difficult to move either up or down, and I recollect it being proposed, on several occasions, that I should go for a ladder to see and extricate him, but I never had any need really to do so, for he always managed somehow either to get down or to ascend to the top. The number of books we thus devoured was very great. I forgot great part of what I read, but my friend, notwithstanding he read with such rapidity, remained, to my surprise, master of it all, and could even, weeks and months afterwards, repeat a whole page in which any thing had particularly struck him at the moment. After we had continued this practice of reading for two years or more together, he proposed that we should recite to each other alternately such adventures of knight-errants as we could ourselves contrive; and we continued to do so a long while. He found no difficulty in it, and used to recite for half an hour or more at a time, while I seldom continued half that space. The stories we told were, as Sir Walter has said, interminable—for we were unwilling to have any of our favourite knights killed. Our passion for romance led us to learn Italian together; after a time we could both read it with fluency, and we then copied such tales as we had met with in that language, being a continued succession of battles and enchantments. He began early to collect old ballads, and as my mother could repeat a great many, he used to come and learn those she could recite to him. He used to get all the copies of these ballads he could, and select the best.

These, no doubt, were among the germs of the collection of ballads in six little volumes, which, from the handwriting, had been begun at this early period, and which is still preserved at Abbotsford. And it appears, that at least as early a date must be ascribed to another collection of little humorous stories in prose, the *Penny Chap-books*, as they are called, still in high favour among the lower classes in Scotland, which stands on the same shelf. In a letter of 1830* he states that he had bound up things of this kind to the extent of several volumes, before he was ten years old.

Although the Ashestiel Memoir mentions so very lightly his boyish addiction to verse, and the rebuke which his vein received from the Apothecary's blue-buskined wife as having been followed by similar treatment on the part of others, I am inclined to believe that while thus devouring, along with his young friend, the stores of Italian romance, he essayed, from time to time, to weave some of their materials into rhyme;—nay, that he must have made at least one rather serious effort of this kind, as early as the date of these rambles to the Salisbury Crags. I have found among his mother's papers a copy of verses headed, "*Lines to Mr. Walter Scott—on reading his poem of Guiscard and Matilda, inscribed to Miss Keith of Ravelston.*" There is no date; but I conceive the lines bear internal evidence of having been written when he was very young—not, I should suppose, above fourteen or fifteen at most. I think it also certain that the writer was a woman; and have almost as little doubt that they came from the pen of his old admirer, Mrs. Cockburn. They are as follows:—

"If such the accents of thy early youth
When playful fancy holds the place of truth;

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* See Strang's Germany in 1831, vol. i., p. 265.

If so divinely sweet thy numbers flow,
And thy young heart melts with such tender woe,
What praise, what admiration shall be thine,
When sense mature with science shall combine
To raise thy genius and thy taste refine!

"Go on, dear youth, the glorious path pursue
Which bounteous Nature kindly smooths for you;
Go, bid the seeds her hand hath sown arise,
By timely culture, to their native skies;
Go, and employ the poet's heavenly art,
Not merely to delight, but mend the heart.
Than other poets happier mayst thou prove,
More blest in friendship, fortunate in love,
Whilst Fame, who longs to make true merit known
Impatient waits, to claim thee as her own.

"Scorning the yoke of prejudice and pride,
Thy tender mind let truth and reason guide—
Let meek humility thy steps attend,
And firm integrity, youth's surest friend.
So peace and honour all thy hours shall bless,
And conscious rectitude each joy increase;
A nobler meed be thine than empty praise—
Heaven shall approve thy life, and Keith thy lays."

At the period to which I refer these verses, Scott's parents still continued to have some expectations of curing his lameness, and Mr. Irving remembers to have often assisted in applying the electrical apparatus, on which for a considerable time they principally rested their hopes. There is an allusion to these experiments in Scott's autobiographical fragment, but I have found a fuller notice on the margin of his copy of the "Guide to Health, Beauty, Riches, and Longevity," as Captain Grose chose to entitle an amusing collection of quack advertisements.

"The celebrated Dr. Graham" (says the annotator) "was an empiric of some genius and great assurance. In fact, he had a dash of madness in his composition. He had a fine electrical apparatus, and used it with skill. I myself, amongst others, was subjected to a course of electricity under his charge. I remember seeing the old Earl of Hopetoun seated in a large arm-chair, and hung round with a collar, and a belt of magnets, like an Indian chief. After this, growing quite wild, Graham set up his *Temple of Health*, and lectured on the *celestial bed*. He attempted a course of these lectures at Edinburgh, and as the Magistrates refused to let him do so, he libelled them in a series of advertisements, the flights of which were infinitely more absurd and exalted than those which Grose has collected. In one tirade (long in my possession), he declared that 'he looked down upon them' (the Magistrates) 'as the sun in his meridian glory looks down on the poor, feeble, stinking glimmer of an expiring farthing candle, or as G— himself, in the plenitude of his omnipotence, may regard the insolent bouncings of a few refractory maggots in a rotten cheese.' Graham was a good-looking man; he used to come to the Grey-friars' Church in a suit of white and silver, with a chapeau-bras, and his hair marvellously dressed into a sort of double toupee, which divided upon his head like the two tops of Parnassus. Mrs. Macauley, the historianess, married his brother. Lady Hamilton is said to have first en-acted his Goddess of Health, being at this time a *fille de joie* of great celebrity.* The Temple of Health dwindled into a sort of obscene *hell*, or gambling-house. In a quarrel which took place there, a poor young man was run into the bowels with a red-hot poker, of which injury he died. The mob vented their fury on the house, and the Magistrates, somewhat of the latest, shut up the exhibition. A quantity of glass and crystal trumpery, the remains of the splendid apparatus, was sold on the South Bridge for next to nothing. Graham's next receipt was *the earth-bath*, with which he wrought some cures, but that also failing, he was, I believe, literally starved to death."

Graham's earth-bath too was, I understand, tried upon Scott, but his was not one of the cases, if any such there were, in which it worked a cure. He, however, improved about this time greatly in his general health and strength, and Mr. Irving, in accordance with the statement in the Memoir, assures me, that while attending the early class at the College, the young friends extended their walks, so as to visit in succession all the old castles within eight or ten miles of Edinburgh. "Sir Walter" (he says) "was specially fond of Rosslyn. We frequently walked thither before breakfast—after breakfasting there walked all down the river side to Lasswade—and thence home to town before dinner. He used generally to rest one hand on my shoulder when we walked together, and leaned with the other on a stout stick."

The love of picturesque scenery, and especially of feudal castles, with which the vicinity of Edinburgh is plentifully garnished, awoke, as the Memoir tells us, the desire of being able to use the pencil. Mr. Irving says,—"I attended one summer a class of drawing along with him, but although both fond of it, we found it took up so much time that we gave this up before we had made much progress." In one of his later diaries, Scott himself gives the following more particular account of this matter:—

"I took lessons of oil-painting in youth from a little Jew animalcule —a smouch called Burrell—a clever sensible creature though. But I could make no progress either in painting or drawing. Nature denied me the correctness of eye and neatness of hand. Yet I was very desirous to be a draughtsman at least—and laboured harder to attain that point, than at any other in my recollection to which I did not make some approaches. Burrell was not useless to me altogether neither. He was a Prussian, and I got from him many a long story of the battles of Frederick, in whose armies his father had been a commissary, or perhaps a spy. I remember his picturesque account of seeing a party of the *black hussars* bringing in some forage carts which they had taken from a body of the Cossacks, whom he described as lying on the top of the carts of hay mortally wounded, and like the dying gladiator, eyeing their own blood as it ran down through the straw."

A year or two later, Scott renewed his attempt. "I afterwards" (he says) "took lessons from Walker, whom we used to call *Blue Beard*. He was one of the most conceited persons in the world, but a good teacher—one of the ugliest countenances he had that need be exhibited—enough, as we say, *to spean weans*. The man was always extremely precise in the quality of every thing about him; his dress, accommodations, and every thing else. He became insolvent, poor man, and, for some reason or other, I attended the meeting of those concerned in his affairs. Instead of ordinary accommodations for writing, each of the persons present was equipped with a large sheet of drawing-paper, and a swan's quill. It was mournfully ridiculous enough. Skirving made an admirable likeness of Walker; not a single scar or mark of the smallpox, which seamed his countenance, but the too accurate brother of the brush had laid it down in longitude and latitude. Poor Walker destroyed it (being in crayons) rather than let the caricature of his ugliness appear at the sale of his effects. I did learn myself to take some vile views from nature. When Will Clerk and I lived very much together, I used sometimes to make them under his instruction. He, to whom, as to all his family, art is a familiar attribute, wondered at me as a Newfoundland dog would at a greyhound which showed fear of the water."

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* Lord Nelson's connexion with this lady will preserve her celebrity.

Notwithstanding all that Scott says about the total failure of his attempts in the art of the pencil, I presume few will doubt that they proved very useful to him afterwards; from them it is natural to suppose he caught the habit of analyzing, with some approach at least to accuracy, the scenes over which his eye might have continued to wander with the vague sense of delight. I may add that a longer and more successful practice of the crayon might, I cannot but think, have produced the reverse of serviceable to him as a future painter with the pen. He might have contracted the habit of copying from pictures rather than from nature itself; and we should thus have lost that which constitutes the very highest charm in his delineations of scenery, namely, that the effect is produced by the selection of a few striking features, arranged with a light unconscious grace, neither too much nor too little—equally remote from the barren generalizations of a former age, and the dull servile fidelity with which so many inferior writers of our time fill in both background and foreground, having no more notion of the perspective of genius than Chinese paper-stainers have of that of the atmosphere, and producing in fact not descriptions but inventories.

The illness, which he alludes to in his Memoir as interrupting for a considerable period his attendance on the Latin and Greek classes in Edinburgh College, is spoken of more largely in one of his prefaces.* It arose from the bursting of a blood-vessel in the lower bowels; and I have heard him say that his uncle, Dr. Rutherford, considered his recovery from it as little less than miraculous. His sweet temper and calm courage were no doubt important elements of safety. He submitted without a murmur to the severe discipline prescribed by his affectionate physician, and found consolation in poetry, romance, and the enthusiasm of young friendship. Day after day John Irving relieved his mother and sister in their attendance upon him. The bed on which he lay was piled with a constant succession of works of imagination, and sad realities were forgotten amidst the brilliant day-dreams of genius drinking unwearied from the eternal fountains of Spenser and Shakspeare. Chess was recommended as a relief to these unintermitted though desultory studies; and he engaged eagerly in the game which had found favour with so many of his Paladins. Mr. Irving remembers playing it with him hour after hour, in very cold weather, when, the windows being kept open as a part of the medical treatment, nothing but youthful nerves and spirit could have persevered. But Scott did not pursue the science of chess after his boyhood. He used to say that it was a shame to throw away upon mastering a mere game, however ingenious, the time which would suffice for the acquisition of a new language. "Surely," he said, "chess-playing is a sad waste of brains."

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* See Preface to Waverley, 1829.

His recovery was completed by another visit to Roxburghshire. Captain Robert Scott, who had been so kind to the sickly infant at Bath, finally retired about this time from his profession, and purchased the elegant villa of Rosebank, on the Tweed, a little below Kelso. Here Walter now took up his quarters, and here, during all the rest of his youth, he found, whenever he chose, a second home, in many respects more agreeable than his own. His uncle, as letters to be subsequently quoted will show, had nothing of his father's coldness for polite letters, but entered into all his favourite pursuits with keen sympathy, and was consulted, from this time forth, upon all his juvenile essays, both in prose and verse.

He does not seem to have resumed attendance at College during the session of 1785–6; so that the Latin and Greek classes, with that of Logic, were the only ones he had passed through previous to the signing of his indentures as an apprentice to his father. The Memoir mentions the ethical course of Dugald Stewart, as if he had gone immediately from the logical professor (Mr. Bruce) to that eminent lecturer; but he, in fact, attended Mr. Stewart four years afterwards, when beginning to consider himself as finally destined for the bar.

I shall only add to what he sets down on the subject of his early academical studies, that in this, as in almost every case, he appears to have underrated his own attainments. He had, indeed, no pretensions to the name of an extensive, far less of an accurate, Latin scholar; but he could read, I believe, any Latin author, of any age, so as to catch without difficulty his meaning; and although his favourite Latin poet, as well as historian, in later days, was Buchanan, he had preserved, or subsequently acquired, a strong relish for some others of more ancient date. I may mention, in particular, Lucan and Claudian. Of Greek, he does not exaggerate in saying that he had forgotten even the alphabet; for he was puzzled with the words ἀοιδος and ϖοιητης, which he had occasion to introduce, from some authority on his table, into his "Introduction to Popular Poetry," written in April 1830; and happening to be in the house with him at the time, he sent for me to insert them for him in his MS. Mr. Irving has informed us of the early period at which he enjoyed the real Tasso and Ariosto. I presume he had at least as soon as this enabled himself to read Gil Blas in the original; and, in all probability, we may refer to the same time of his life, or one not much later, his acquisition of as much Spanish as served for the Guerras Civiles de Granada, Lazarillo de Tormes, and, above all, Don Quixote. He read all these languages in after life with about the same facility. I never but once heard him attempt to speak any of them, and that was when some of the courtiers of Charles X. came to Abbotsford, soon after that unfortunate prince took up his residence for the second time at Holyroodhouse. Finding that one or two of these gentlemen could speak no English at all, he made some efforts to amuse them in their own language after the champagne had been passing briskly round the table; and I was amused next morning with the expression of one of the party, who, alluding to the sort of reading in which Sir Walter seemed to have chiefly occupied himself, said, "Mon Dieu! comme il estropiait, entre deux vins, le Français du bon sire de Joinville!" Of all these tongues, as of German somewhat later, he acquired as much as was needful for his own purposes, of which a critical study of any foreign language made at no time any part. In them he sought for incidents, and he found images; but for the treasures of diction he was content to dig on British soil. He had all he wanted in the old wells of "English undefiled," and the still living, though fast shrinking, waters of that sister idiom which had not always, as he flattered himself, deserved the name of a dialect.

As may be said, I believe, with perfect truth of every really great man, Scott was self-educated in every branch of knowledge which he ever turned to account in the works of his genius—and he has himself told us that his real studies were those lonely and desultory ones of which he has given us a copy in the first chapter of Waverley, where the hero is represented as "driving through the sea of books, like a vessel without pilot or rudder;" that is to say, obeying nothing but the strong breath of native inclination;—"He had read, and stored in a memory of uncommon tenacity, much curious, though ill arranged and miscellaneous information. In English literature, he was master of Shakspeare and Milton, of our earlier dramatic authors, of many picturesque and interesting passages from our old historical chronicles, and was particularly well acquainted with Spenser, Drayton, and other poets, who have exercised themselves on romantic fiction,—*of all themes the most fascinating to a youthful imagination, before the passions have roused themselves, and demand poetry of a more sentimental description*."* I need not repeat his enumeration of other favourites, Pulci, the Decameron, Froissart, Brantome, Delanoue, and the chivalrous and romantic lore of Spain. I have quoted a passage so well known, only for the sake of the striking circumstance by which it marks the very early date of these multifarious studies.

CHAPTER V.

ILLUSTRATIONS CONTINUED—SCOTT'S APPRENTICESHIP TO HIS FATHER—EXCURSIONS TO THE HIGHLANDS, &c.—DEBATING SOCIETIES—EARLY CORRESPONDENCE, &c. &c.—1786-1790.

In the Minute-books of the Society of Writers to the Signet appears the following entry:—"Edinburgh, 15th May, 1786. Compeared Walter Scott, and presented an indenture, dated 31st March last, entered into between him and Walter Scott, his son, for five years from the date thereof, under a mutual penalty of £40 sterling."

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* Waverley, vol. i. p. 32.

An inauspicious step this might at first sight appear in the early history of one so strongly predisposed for pursuits wide as the antipodes asunder from the dry technicalities of conveyancing; but he himself, I believe, was never heard, in his mature age, to express any regret that it should have been taken; and I am convinced for my part that it was a fortunate one. It prevented him, indeed, from passing with the usual regularity through a long course of Scotch metaphysics; but I extremely doubt whether any discipline could ever have led him to derive either pleasure or profit from studies of that order. His apprenticeship left him time enough, as we shall find, for continuing his application to the stores of poetry and romance, and those old chroniclers, who to the end were his darling historians. Indeed, if he had wanted any new stimulus, the necessity of devoting certain hours of every day to a routine of drudgery, however it might have operated on a spirit more prone to earth, must have tended to quicken his appetite for "the sweet bread eaten in secret." But the duties which he had now to fulfil were, in various ways, directly and positively beneficial to the developement both of his genius and his character. It was in the discharge of his functions as a Writer's Apprentice that he first penetrated into the Highlands, and formed those friendships among the surviving heroes of 1745, which laid the foundation for one great class of his works. Even the less attractive parts of his new vocation were calculated to give him a more complete insight into the smaller workings of poor human nature, than can ever perhaps be gathered from the experience of the legal profession in its highest walk;—the etiquette of the bar in Scotland, as in England, being averse to personal intercourse between the advocate and his client. But, finally, and I will say chiefly, it was to this prosaic discipline that he owed those habits of steady, sober diligence, which few imaginative authors had ever before exemplified—and which, unless thus beaten into his composition at a ductile stage, even he, in all probability, could never have carried into the almost professional exercise of some of the highest and most delicate faculties of the human mind. He speaks, in not the least remarkable passage of the preceding Memoir, as if constitutional indolence had been his portion in common with all the members of his father's family. When Gifford, in a dispute with Soame Jenyns, quoted Doctor Johnson's own confession that he "knew little Greek," Jenyns answered, "Yes, young man; but how shall we know what Johnson would have called much Greek?" and Gifford has recorded the deep impression which this hint left on his own mind. What Scott would have called constitutional diligence, I know not; but surely if indolence of any kind had been inherent in his nature, even the triumph of Socrates was not more signal than his.

It will be, by some of my friends, considered as trivial to remark on such a circumstance—but the reader who is unacquainted with the professional habits of the Scotch lawyers, may as well be told that the Writer's Apprentice receives a certain allowance in money for every page he transcribes; and that, as in those days the greater part of the business, even of the supreme courts, was carried on by means of written papers, a ready penman, in a well-employed chamber, could earn in this way enough, at all events, to make a handsome addition to the pocket-money which was likely to be thought suitable for a youth of fifteen by such a man as the elder Scott. The allowance being, I believe, threepence for every page containing a certain fixed number of words, when Walter had finished, as he tells us he occasionally did, 120 pages within twenty-four hours, his fee would amount to thirty shillings; and in his early letters I find him more than once congratulating himself on having been, by some such exertion, enabled to purchase a book, or a coin, otherwise beyond his reach. A schoolfellow, who was now, like himself, a writer's apprentice, recollects the eagerness with which he thus made himself master of "Evans's Ballads," shortly after their publication; and another of them, already often referred to, remembers, in particular, his rapture with Meikle's "Cumnor Hall," which first appeared in that collection. "After the labours of the day were over," says Mr. Irving, "we often walked in *the Meadows*" (a large field intersected by formal alleys of old trees, adjoining George's Square), "especially in the moonlight nights; and he seemed never weary of repeating the first stanza—

'The dews of summer light did fall—
 The Moon, sweet regent of the sky,
Silvered the walls of Cumnor Hall,
 And many an oak that grew thereby.'"

I have thought it worth while to preserve these reminiscences of his companions at the time, though he has himself stated the circumstance in his Preface to Kenilworth. "There is a period in youth," he there says, "when the mere power of numbers has a more strong effect on ear and imagination than in after life. At this season of immature taste, the author was greatly delighted with the poems of Meikle and Langhorne. The first stanza of Cumnor Hall especially had a peculiar enchantment for his youthful ear—the force of which is not yet (1829) entirely spent."—

Thus that favourite elegy, after having dwelt on his memory and imagination for forty years, suggested the subject of one of his noblest romances.

It is affirmed by a preceding biographer, on the authority of one of these brother-apprentices, that about this period Scott showed him a MS. poem on "the Conquest of Granada," in four books, each amounting to about 400 lines, which, soon after it was finished, he committed to the flames.* As he states in his Essay on the Imitation of Popular Poetry, that, for ten years previous to 1796, when his first translation from the German was executed, he had written no verses "except an occasional sonnet to his mistress's eyebrow," I presume this Conquest of Granada, the fruit of his study of the *Guerras Civiles*, must be assigned to the summer of 1786—or, making allowance for trivial inaccuracy, to the next year at latest. It was probably composed in imitation of Meikle's Lusiad;—at all events, we have a very distinct statement, that he made no attempts in the manner of the old minstrels, early as his admiration for them had been, until the period of his acquaintance with Bürger. Thus with him, as with most others, genius had hazarded many a random effort ere it discovered the true key-note. Long had

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* Life of Scott, by Mr. Allan, p. 53.

> 'Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
> And an uncertain warbling made,'

before 'the measure wild' was caught, and

> 'In varying cadence, soft or strong,
> He swept the sounding chords along.'

His youthful admiration of Langhorne has been rendered memorable by his own record of his first and only interview with his great predecessor, Robert Burns. Although the letter, in which he narrates this incident, addressed to myself in 1827, when I was writing a short biography of that poet, has been often reprinted, it is too important for my present purpose to be omitted here.

"As for Burns" (he writes), "I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum*. I was a lad of fifteen in 1786–7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him; but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner, but had no opportunity to keep his word, otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Fergusson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course we youngsters sate silent, looked and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns's manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on the one side, on the other his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath,—

> 'Cold on Canadian hills or Minden's plain,
> Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain;
> Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
> The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
> Gave the sad presage of his future years,
> The child of misery baptized in tears.'

Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were, and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's, called by the unpromising title of 'The Justice of the Peace.' I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received and still recollect with very great pleasure.

"His person was strong and robust: his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents.

His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture, but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I would have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school—*i. e.* none of your modern agriculturists, who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large and of a dark cast, and glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men in my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted, nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognise me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh, but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

"I remember on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns' acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited, and also, that having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models; there was doubtless national predilection in his estimate."

I need not remark on the extent of knowledge, and justice of taste, exemplified in this early measurement of Burns, both as a student of English literature and as a Scottish poet. The print, over which Scott saw Burns shed tears, is still in the possession of Dr. Fergusson's family, and I had often heard him tell the story, in the room where the precious relic hangs, before I requested him to set it down in writing—how little anticipating the use to which I should ultimately apply it!

His intimacy with Adam (now Sir Adam Fergusson) was thus his first means of introduction to the higher literary society of Edinburgh, and it was very probably to that connexion that he owed, among the rest, his acquaintance with the blind poet Blacklock, whom Johnson, twelve years earlier, "beheld with reverence." We have seen, however, that the venerable author of Douglas was a friend of his own parents, and had noticed him even in his infancy at Bath. John Home now inhabited a villa at no great distance from Edinburgh, and there, all through his young days, Scott was a frequent guest. Nor must it be forgotten that his uncle, Dr. Rutherford, inherited much of the general accomplishments, as well as the professional reputation of his father—and that it was beneath that roof he saw, several years before this, Dr. Cartwright, then in the enjoyment of some fame as a poet. In this family, indeed, he had more than one kind and strenuous encourager of his early literary tastes, as will be shown abundantly when we reach certain relics of his correspondence with his mother's sister, Miss Christian Rutherford. Dr. Rutherford's good-natured remonstrances with him, as a boy, for reading at breakfast, are well remembered, and will remind my reader of a similar trait in the juvenile manners both of Burns and Byron; nor was this habit entirely laid aside even in Scott's advanced age.

If he is quite accurate in referring his first acquintance with the Highlands to his fifteenth year, this incident also belongs to the first season of his apprenticeship. His father had, among a rather numerous list of Highland clients, Alexander Stewart of Invernahyle, an enthusiastic Jacobite, who had survived to recount, in secure and vigorous old age, his active experiences in the insurrections both of 1715 and 1745. He had, it appears, attracted Walter's attention and admiration at a very early date; for he speaks of having "seen him in arms" and heard him "exult in the prospect of drawing his claymore once more before he died," when Paul Jones threatened a descent on Edinburgh; which transaction occurred in September 1779. Invernahyle, as Scott adds, was the only person who seemed to have retained possession of his cool senses at the period of that disgraceful alarm, and offered the magistrates to collect as many Highlanders as would suffice for cutting off any part of the pirate's crew that might venture in quest of plunder into a city full of high houses and narrow lanes, and every way well calculated for defence. The eager delight with which the young apprentice now listened to the tales of this fine old man's early days produced an invitation to his residence among the mountains, and to this excursion he probably devoted the few weeks of an autumnal vacation—whether in 1786 or 1787, it is of no great consequence to ascertain.

In the Introduction to one of his Novels he has preserved a vivid picture of his sensations when the vale of Perth first burst on his view, in the course of his progress to Invernahyle, and the description has made classical ground for the *Wicks of Baiglie*, the spot from which that beautiful landscape was surveyed. "Childish wonder, indeed," he says, "was an ingredient in my delight, for I was not above fifteen years old, and as this had been the first excursion which I was permitted to make on a pony of my own, I also experienced the glow of independence mingled with that degree of anxiety which the most conceited boy feels when he is first abandoned to his own undirected counsels. I recollect pulling up the reins, without meaning to do so, and gazing on the scene before me as if I had been afraid it would shift, like those in a theatre, before I could distinctly observe its different parts, or convince myself that what I saw was real. Since that hour, the recollection of that inimitable landscape has possessed the strongest influence over my mind, and retained its place as a memorable thing, while much that was influential on my own fortunes has fled from my recollection." So speaks the poet; and who will not recognise his habitual modesty, in thus undervaluing, as uninfluential in comparison with some affair of worldly business, the ineffaceable impression thus stamped on the glowing imagination of his boyhood?

I need not quote the numerous passages scattered over his writings, both early and late, in which he dwells with fond affection on the chivalrous character of Ivernahyle—the delight with which he heard the veteran describe his broadsword duel with Rob Roy—his campaigns with Mars and Charles Edward—and his long seclusion (as pictured in the story of Bradwardine) within a rocky cave situated not far from his own house, while it was garrisoned by a party of English soldiers, after the battle of Culloden. Here, too, still survived the trusty henchman who had attended the chieftain in many a bloody field and perilous escape, the same "grim-looking old Highlander" who was in the act of cutting down Colonel Whitefoord with his Lochaber axe at Prestonpans when his master arrested the blow—an incident to which Invernahyle owed his life, and to which we are indebted for another of the most striking pages in Waverley.

I have often heard Scott mention some curious particulars of his first visit to the remote fastness of one of these Highland friends; but whether he told the story of Invernahyle, or of one of his own relations of the Clan Campbell, I do not recollect; I rather think the latter was the case. On reaching the brow of a bleak eminence overhanging the primitive tower and its tiny patch of cultivated ground, he found his host and three sons, perhaps half-a-dozen attendant *gillies*, all stretched half asleep in their tartans upon the heath, with dogs, and a profusion of game about them; while in the courtyard, far below, appeared a company of women, actively engaged in loading a cart with manure. The stranger was not a little astonished when he discovered, on descending from the height, that among these industrious females were the laird's own lady, and two or three of her daughters; but they seemed quite unconscious of having been detected in an occupation unsuitable to their rank—retired presently to their "bowers," and when they re-appeared in other dresses, retained no traces of their morning's work, except complexions glowing with a radiant freshness, for one evening of which many a high-bred beauty would have bartered half her diamonds. He found the young ladies not ill informed, and exceedingly agreeable; and the song and the dance seemed to form the invariable termination of their busy days. I must not forget his admiration at the principal article of this laird's first course; namely, a gigantic *haggis*, borne into the hall in a wicker basket by two half-naked Celts, while the piper strutted fiercely behind them, blowing a tempest of dissonance.

These Highland visits were repeated almost every summer for several successive years, and perhaps even the first of them was in some degree connected with his professional business. At all events, it was to his allotted task of enforcing the execution of a legal instrument against some Maclarens, refractory tenants of Stewart of Appin, brother-in-law to Ivernahyle, that Scott owed his introduction to the scenery of the Lady of the Lake. "An escort of a sergeant and six men," he says, "was obtained from a Highland regiment lying in Stirling, and the author, then a writer's apprentice, equivalent to the honourable situation of an attorney's clerk, was invested with the superintendence of the expedition, with directions to see that the messenger discharged his duty fully, and that the gallant sergeant did not exceed his part by committing violence or plunder. And thus it happened, oddly enough, that the author first entered the romantic scenery of Loch

Katrine, of which he may perhaps say he has somewhat extended the reputation, riding in all the dignity of danger, with a front and rear guard, and loaded arms. The sergeant was absolutely a Highland Sergeant Kite, full of stories of Rob Roy and of himself, and a very good companion. We experienced no interruption whatever, and, when we came to Inverenty, found the house deserted. We took up our quarters for the night, and used some of the victuals which we found there. The Maclarens, who probably had never thought of any serious opposition, went to America, where, having had some slight share in removing them from their *paupera regna*, I sincerely hope they prospered."*

That he entered with ready zeal into such professional business as inferred Highland expeditions with comrades who had known Rob Roy, no one will think strange; but more than one of his biographers allege, that in the ordinary indoor fagging of the chamber in George's Square, he was always an unwilling, and rarely an efficient assistant. Their addition that he often played chess with one of his companions in the office, and had to conceal the board with precipitation when the old gentleman's footsteps were heard on the staircase, is, I do not doubt, true; and we may remember along with it his own insinuation that his father was sometimes poring in his secret nook over Spottiswoode or Wodrow when his apprentices supposed him to be deep in Dirleton's Doubts, or Stair's Decisions. But the Memoir of 1808, so candid—indeed, more than candid—as to many juvenile irregularities, contains no confession that supports the broad assertion to which I have alluded; nor can I easily believe, that with his affection for his father, and that sense of duty which seems to have been inherent in his character, and lastly, with the evidence of a most severe training in industry which the habits of his after-life presented, it is at all deserving of serious acceptation. His mere handwriting, indeed, continued, during the whole of his prime, to afford most striking and irresistible proof how completely he must have submitted himself for some very considerable period to the mechanical discipline of his father's office. It spoke to months after months of this humble toil, as distinctly as the illegible scrawl of Lord Byron did to his self-mastership from the hour that he left Harrow. There are some little technical tricks, such as no gentleman who has not been subjected to a similar regimen ever can fall into, which he practised invariably while composing his poetry, which appear not unfrequently on the MSS. of his best novels, and which now and then dropt instinctively from his pen, even in the private letters and diaries of his closing years. I allude particularly to a sort of flourish at the bottom of the page, originally, I presume, adopted in engrossing as a safeguard against the intrusion of a forged line between the legitimate text and the attesting signature. He was quite sensible that this ornament might as well be dispensed with; and his family often heard him mutter, after involuntarily performing it, "There goes the old shop again!"

I dwell on this matter, because it was always his favourite tenet, in contradiction to what he called the cant of sonnetteers, that there is no necessary connexion between genius and an aversion or contempt for any of the common duties of life; he thought, on the contrary, that to spend some fair portion of every day in any matter of fact occupation, is good for the higher faculties themselves in the upshot. In a word, from beginning to end, he piqued himself on being *a man of business;* and did—with one sad and memorable exception—whatever the ordinary course of things threw in his way, in exactly the business-like fashion which might have been expected from the son of a thoroughbred old Clerk to the Signet, who had never deserted his father's profession.

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* Introduction to Rob Roy, p. lxxxix, note.

In the winter of 1788, however, his apprentice habits were exposed to a new danger; and from that date I believe them to have undergone a considerable change. He was then sent to attend the lectures of the Professor of Civil Law in the University, this course forming part of the usual professional education of Writers to the Signet, as well as of Advocates. For some time his companions, when in Edinburgh, had been chiefly, almost solely, his brother apprentices and the clerks in his father's office. He had latterly seen comparatively little even of the better of his old High School friends, such as Fergusson and Irving—for though both of these also were writer's apprentices, they had been indentured to other masters, and each had naturally formed new intimacies within his own chamber. The civil law class brought him again into daily contact with both Irving and Fergusson, as well as others of his earlier acquaintance of the higher ranks; but it also led him into the society of some young gentlemen previously unknown to him, who had from the outset been destined for the bar, and whose conversation, tinctured with certain prejudices natural to scions of what he calls in Redgauntlet *the Scottish noblesse de la robe,* soon banished from his mind every thought of ultimately adhering to the secondary branch of the law. He found these future barristers cultivating general literature without any apprehension that such elegant pursuits could be regarded by any one as interfering with the proper studies of their professional career; justly believing, on the contrary, that for the higher class of forensic exertion some acquaintance with almost every branch of science and letters is a necessary preparative. He contrasted their liberal aspirations, and the encouragement which these received in their domestic circles, with the narrower views which predominated in his own home, and resolved to gratify his ambition by adopting a most precarious walk in life, instead of adhering to that in which he might have counted with perfect security on the early attainment of pecuniary independence. This resolution appears to have been foreseen by his father, long before it was announced in terms; and the handsome manner in which the old gentleman conducted himself upon the occasion, is remembered with dutiful gratitude in the preceding autobiography.

The most important of these new alliances was the intimate friendship which he now formed with William Clerk of Eldin, of whose powerful talents and extensive accomplishments we shall hereafter meet with many enthusiastic notices. It was in company with this gentleman that he entered the debating societies described in his Memoir; through him he soon became linked in the closest intimacy with

George Cranstoun (now Lord Corehouse), George Abercromby (now Lord Abercromby), Sir Patrick Murray of Ochtertyre, John James Edmonstone of Newton, Patrick Murray of Simprim, and a group of other young men, all high in birth and connexion, and all remarkable in early life for the qualities which afterwards led them to eminent station, or adorned it. The introduction to their several families is alluded to by Scott as having opened to him abundantly certain advantages, which no one could have been more qualified to improve, but from which he had hitherto been in great measure debarred in consequence of the retired habits of his parents.

Mr. Clerk says, that he had been struck from the first day he entered the civil law class-room with something odd and remarkable in Scott's appearance; what this something was he cannot now recall, but he remembers telling his companion some time afterwards that he thought he looked like a *hautboy-player*. Scott was amused with this notion, as he had never touched any musical instrument of any kind; but I fancy his friend had been watching a certain noticeable but altogether indescribable play of the upper lip when in an abstracted mood. He rallied Walter, he says, during one of their first evening walks together, on the slovenliness of his dress; he wore a pair of corduroy breeches, much glazed by the rubbing of his staff, which he immediately flourished—and said, "they be good enough for drinking in—let us go and have some oysters in the Covenant Close."

Convivial habits were then indulged among the young men of Edinburgh, whether students of law, writers, or barristers, to an extent now happily unknown; and this anecdote recalls some striking hints on that subject which occur in Scott's brief autobiography. That he partook profusely in the juvenile bacchanalia of that day, and continued to take a plentiful share in such jollities down to the time of his marriage, are facts worthy of being distinctly stated—for no man in mature life was more habitually averse to every sort of intemperance. He could, when I first knew him, swallow a great quantity of wine without being at all visibly disordered by it; but nothing short of some very particular occasion could ever induce him to put this strength of head to a trial; and I have heard him many times utter words which no one in the days of his youthful temptation can be the worse for remembering:—"Depend upon it, of all vices drinking is the most incompatible with greatness."

The liveliness of his conversation—the strange variety of his knowledge—and above all, perhaps, the portentous tenacity of his memory—riveted more and more Clerk's attention, and commanded the wonder of all his new allies; but of these extraordinary gifts Scott himself appeared to be little conscious; or at least he impressed them all as attaching infinitely greater consequence (exactly as had been the case with him in the days of the Cowgate Port and the *kittle nine steps*) to feats of personal agility and prowess. William Clerk's brother, James, a midshipman in the navy, happened to come home from a cruise in the Mediterranean shortly after this acquaintance began, and Scott and the sailor became almost at sight "sworn brothers." In order to complete his time under the late Sir Alexander Cochrane, who was then on the Leith station, James Clerk obtained the command of a lugger, and the young friends often made little excursions to sea with him. "The first time Scott dined on board," says William Clerk, "we met before embarking at a tavern in Leith—it was a large party, mostly midshipmen, and strangers to him, and our host introducing his landsmen guests said,.'my brother you know, gentlemen; as for Mr. Scott, mayhaps you may take him for a poor lamiter, but he is the first to begin a row, and the last to end it;' which eulogium he confirmed with some of the expletives of Tom Pipes."* When, many years afterwards, Clerk read The Pirate, he was startled by the resurrection of a hundred traits of the tabletalk of this lugger; but the author has since traced some of the most striking passages in that novel to his recollection of the almost childish period when he hung on his own brother Robert's stories about Rodney's battles and the haunted *keys* of the West Indies.

One morning Scott called on Clerk, and, exhibiting his stick all cut and marked, told him he had been attacked in the streets the night before by three fellows, against whom he had defended himself for an hour. "By Shrewsbury clock?" said his friend. "No," says Scott smiling, "by the Tron." But thenceforth, adds Mr. Clerk, and for twenty years after, he called his walking-stick by the name of "Shrewsbury."

With these comrades Scott now resumed, and pushed to a much greater extent, his early habits of wandering over the country in quest of castles and other remains of antiquity, his passion for which derived a new impulse from the conversation of the celebrated John Clerk of Eldin,† the father of his friend. William Clerk well remembers his father telling a story which was introduced in due time in The Antiquary. While he was visiting his grandfather, Sir John Clerk, at Dumcrieff, in Dumfriesshire, many years before this time, the old Baronet carried some English Virtuosos to see a supposed Roman camp; and on his exclaiming at a particular spot, "this I take to have been the Prætorium," a herdsman, who stood by, answered, "Prætorium here, Prætorium there, I made it wi' a flaughter spade."‡ Many traits of the elder Clerk were, his son has no doubt, embroidered on the character of George Constable in the composition of Jonathan Oldbuck. The old gentleman's enthusiasm for antiquities was often played on by these young friends, but more effectually by his eldest son, John Clerk (Lord Eldin), who, having a great genius for art, used to amuse himself with manufacturing mutilated heads, which, after being buried for a convenient time in the ground, were accidentally discovered in some fortunate hour, and received by the laird with great honour as valuable accessions to his museum.§

On a fishing excursion to a loch near Howgate, among the Moorfoot Hills, Scott, Clerk, Irving, and Abercromby spent the night in a little public-house kept by one Mrs. Margaret Dods. When St. Ronan's Well was published, Clerk, meeting Scott in the street, observed, "That's an odd name; surely I have met with it somewhere before." Scott smiled, said, "Don't you remember Howgate?" and passed on. The name alone, however, was taken from the Howgate hostess.

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* "Dinna steer him," says Hobbie Elliot; "ye may think Elshie's but a lamiter, but I warrant ye, grippie for grippie, he'll gar the blue blood spin frae your nails—his hand's like a smith's vice."—*Black Dwarf—Waverley Novels*, vol. ix. p. 202.

† Author of the famous Essay on dividing the Line in Sea-fights.

‡ Compare "The Antiquary," vol. i. p. 49.

§ The most remarkable of these *antique heads* was so highly appreciated by another distinguished connoisseur, the late Earl of Buchan, that he carried it off from Mr. Clerk's museum, and presented it to the Scottish Society of Antiquaries—in whose collection, no doubt, it may still be admired.

At one of their drinking bouts of those days, William Clerk, Sir P. Murray, Edmonstone, and Abercromby being of the party, the sitting was prolonged to a very late hour, and Scott fell asleep. When he awoke, his friends succeeded in convincing him that he had sung a song in the course of the evening, and sung it extremely well. How must these gentlemen have chuckled when they read Frank Osbaldistone's account of his revels in the old hall!—"It has even been reported by maligners that I sung a song while under this vinous influence; but as I remember nothing of it, and never attempted to turn a tune in all my life, either before or since, I would willingly hope there is no actual foundation for the calumny."*

On one of his first long walks with Clerk and others of the same set, their pace, being about four miles an hour, was found rather too much for Scott, and he offered to contract for three, which measure was thenceforth considered as the legal one. At this rate they often continued to wander from five in the morning till eight in the evening, halting for such refreshment at mid-day as any village alehouse might afford. On many occasions, however, they had stretched so far into the country, that they were obliged to be absent from home all night; and though great was the alarm which the first occurrence of this sort created in George's Square, the family soon got accustomed to such things, and little notice was taken, even though Walter remained away for the better part of a week. I have heard him laugh heartily over the recollections of one protracted excursion, towards the close of which the party found themselves a long day's walk—thirty miles, I think—from Edinburgh, without a single sixpence left among them. "We were put to our shifts," said he; "but we asked every now and then at a cottage-door for a drink of water; and one or two of the goodwives, observing our worn-out looks, brought forth milk in place of water—so with that, and hips and haws, we came in little the worse." His father met him with some impatient questions as to what he had been living on so long, for the old man well knew how scantily his pocket was supplied. "Pretty much like the young ravens," answered he; "I only wished I had been as good a player on the flute as poor George Primrose in the Vicar of Wakefield. If I had his art, I should like nothing better than to tramp like him from cottage to cottage over the world."—"I doubt," said the grave Clerk to the Signet, "I greatly doubt, sir, you were born for nae better than a *gangrel scrape-gut.*" Some allusions to reproaches of this kind occur in the "Memoir;" and we shall find others in letters subsequent to his admission at the bar.

The debating club formed among these young friends at this era of their studies, was called *The Literary Society;* and is not to be confounded with the more celebrated Speculative Society, which Scott did not join for two years later. At *the Literary* he spoke frequently, and very amusingly and sensibly, but was not at all numbered among the most brilliant members. He had a world of knowledge to produce; but he had not acquired the arranging it to the best advantage in a continued address; nor, indeed, did he ever, I think, except under the influence of strong personal feeling, even when years and fame had given him full confidence in himself, exhibit upon any occasion the powers of oral eloquence. His antiquarian information, however, supplied many an interesting feature in these evenings of discussion. He had already dabbled in Anglo-Saxon and the Norse Sagas: in his Essay on Imitations of Popular Poetry, he alludes to these studies as having facilitated his acquisition of German:—But he was deep especially in Fordun and Wyntoun, and all the Scotch chronicles; and his friends rewarded him by the honourable title of *Duns Scotus*.

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* "Rob Roy," Waverley Novels, vol. vii. p. 182.

A smaller society, formed with less ambitious views, originated in a ride to Pennycuik, the seat of the head of Mr. Clerk's family, whose elegant hospitalities are recorded in the Memoir. This was called, by way of excellence, *The Club*, and I believe it is continued under the same name to this day. Here, too, Walter had his sobriquet; and—his corduroy breeches, I presume, not being as yet worn out—it was *Colonel Grogg*.*

Meantime he had not broken up his connexion with Rosebank; he appears to have spent several weeks in the autumn, both of 1788 and 1789, under his uncle's roof; and it was, I think, of his journey thither, in the last-named year, that he used to tell an anecdote, which I shall here set down—how shorn, alas! of all the accessaries that gave it life when he recited it. Calling, before he set out, on one of the ancient spinsters of his family, to enquire if she had any message for Kelso, she retired, and presently placed in his hands a packet of some bulk and weight, which required, she said, very particular attention. He took it without examining the address, and carried it in his pocket next day, not at all to the lightening of a forty miles' ride in August. On his arrival, it turned out to contain one of the old lady's pattens, sealed up for a particular cobbler in Kelso, and accompanied with fourpence to pay for mending it, and special directions that it might be brought back to her by the same economical conveyance.

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* "The members of *The Club* used to meet on Friday evenings in a room in Carruber's Close, from which some of them usually adjourned to sup at an oyster tavern in the same neighbourhood. In after life those of them who chanced to be in Edinburgh dined together twice every year, at the close of the winter and summer sessions of the Law Court; and during thirty years, Sir Walter was very rarely absent on these occasions. It was also a rule, that when any member received an appointment or promotion, he should give a dinner to his old associates; and they had accordingly two such dinners from him—one when he became Sheriff of Selkirkshire, and another when he was named Clerk of Session. The original members were, in number, nineteen—viz., *Sir Walter Scott*, Mr. William Clerk, Sir A. Fergusson, Mr. James Edmonstone, Mr. George Abercromby (Lord Abercromby), Mr. D. Boyle (now Lord Justice-Clerk), Mr. James Glassford (Advocate), Mr. James Ferguson (Clerk of Session), Mr. David Monypenny (Lord Pitmilly), Mr. Robert Davidson (Professor of Law at Glasgow), Sir William Rae, Bart., Sir Patrick Murray, Bart., *David Douglas* (Lord Reston), Mr. Murray of Simprim, Mr. Monteath of Closeburn, *Mr. Archibald Miller* (son of Professor Miller), *Baron Reden*, a Hanoverian; the Honourable *Thomas Douglas*, afterwards Earl of Selkirk,—and John Irving. Except the five whose names are *underlined*, these original members are all still alive."—*Letter from Mr. Irving, dated 29th September*, 1836.

It will be seen from the following letter, the earliest of Scott's writing that has fallen into my hands, that professional business had some share in this excursion to Kelso; but I consider with more interest the brief allusion to a day at Sandy-Knowe.

To Mrs. Scott, George Square, Edinburgh.

"(*With a parcel.*)

"Rosebank, 5th Sept. 1788.

"Dear Mother,

"I was favoured with your letter, and send you Anne's stockings along with this: I would have sent them last week, but had some expectations of a private opportunity. I have been very happy for this fortnight; we have some plan or other for every day. Last week my uncle, my cousin William* and I, rode to Smailholm, and from thence walked to Sandy-knowe Craigs, where we spent the whole day, and made a very hearty dinner by the side of the Orderlaw Well, on some cold beef and bread and cheese: we had also a small case-bottle of rum to make grog with, which we drank to the Sandy-knowe bairns, and all their connexions. This jaunt gave me much pleasure, and had I time, I would give you a more full account of it.

"The fishing has been hitherto but indifferent, and I fear I shall not be able to accomplish my promise with regard to the wild-ducks. I was out on Friday, and only saw three. I may probably, however, send you a hare, as my uncle has got a present of two greyhounds from Sir H. MacDougall, and as he has a license, only waits till the corn is off the ground to commence coursing. Be it known to you, however, I am not altogether employed in amusements, for I have got two or three clients besides my uncle, and am busy drawing tacks and contracts,—not, however, of marriage. I am in a fair way of making money, if I stay here long.

"Here I have written a pretty long letter, and nothing in it; but you know writing to one's friends is the next thing to seeing them. My love to my father and the boys from, dear mother, your dutiful and affectionate son,

WALTER SCOTT."

It appears from James Ballantyne's *memoranda*, that having been very early bound apprentice to a solicitor in Kelso, he had no intercourse with Scott during the three or four years that followed their companionship at the school of Lancelot Whale; but Ballantyne was now sent to spend a winter in Edinburgh for the completion of his professional education, and in the course of his attendance on the Scots-law class, became a member of a young Teviotdale club, where Walter Scott seldom failed to make his appearance. They supped together, it seems, once a month; and here, as in the associations above mentioned, good fellowship was often pushed beyond the limits of modern indulgence. The strict intimacy between Scott and Ballantyne was not at this time renewed—their avocations prevented it—but the latter was no uninterested observer of his old comrade's bearing on this new scene. "Upon all these occasions," he says, "one of the principal features of his character was displayed as conspicuously as I believe it ever was at any later period. This was the remarkable ascendency he never failed to exhibit among his young companions, and which appeared to arise from their involuntary and unconscious submission to the same firmness of understanding, and gentle exercise of it, which produced the same effects throughout his after life. Where there was always a good deal of drinking, there was of course now and then a good deal of quarrelling. But three words from Walter Scott never failed to put all such propensities to quietness."

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* The present Laird of Raeburn.

Mr. Ballantyne's account of his friend's peace-making exertions at this club may seem a little at variance with some preceding details. There is a difference, however, between encouraging quarrels in the bosom of a convivial party, and taking a fair part in a *row* between one's own party and another. But Ballantyne adds, that at *The Teviotdale*, Scott was always remarkable for being the most temperate of the set; and if the club consisted chiefly of persons, like Ballantyne himself, somewhat inferior to Scott in birth and station, his carefulness both of sobriety and decorum at their meetings was but another feature of his unchanged and unchangeable character—*qualis ab imo.*

At one of the many merry suppers of this time, Walter Scott had said something, of which, on recollecting himself next morning, he was sensible that his friend Clerk might have reason to complain. He sent him accordingly a note apologetical, which has by some accident been preserved, and which I am sure every reader will agree with me in considering well worthy of preservation. In it Scott contrives to make use of *both* his own club designations, and addresses his friend by another of the same order, which Clerk had received in consequence of comparing himself on some forgotten occasion to Sir John Brute in the play. This characteristic document is as follows:—

To William Clerk, Esq.

"Dear Baronet,

"I am sorry to find that our friend Colonel Grogg has behaved with a very undue degree of vehemence in a dispute with you last night, occasioned by what I am convinced was a gross misconception of your expressions. As the Colonel, though a military man, is not too haughty to acknowledge an error, he has commissioned me to make his apology as a mutual friend, which I am convinced you will accept from yours ever,

DUNS SCOTUS."

"Given at Castle Duns,
Monday."

I should perhaps have mentioned sooner, that when first *Duns Scotus* became *the Baronet's* daily companion—this new alliance was observed with considerable jealousy by some of his former inseparables of the writing office. At the next annual supper of the clerks and apprentices, the *gaudy* of the chamber, this feeling showed itself in various ways, and when the cloth was drawn, Walter rose and asked what was meant. "Well," said one of the lads, "since you will have it out, you are *cutting* your old friends for the sake of Clerk and some more of these dons that look down on the like of us." "Gentlemen," answered Scott, "I will never *cut* any man unless I detect him in scoundrelism, but I know not what right any of you have to interfere with my choice of my company. If any one thought I had injured him, he would have done well to ask an explanation in a more private manner. As it is, I fairly own that though I like many of you very much, and have long done so, I think William Clerk well worth you all put together." The senior in the chair was wise enough to laugh, and the evening passed off without further disturbance.

As one effect of his office education, Scott soon began to preserve in regular files the letters addressed to him; and from the style and tone of such letters, as Mr. Southey observes in his Life of Cowper, a man's character may often be gathered even more surely than from those written by himself. The first series of any considerable extent in his collection, includes letters dated as far back as 1786, and proceeds, with not many interruptions, down beyond the period when his fame had been established. I regret, that from the delicate nature of the transactions chiefly dwelt upon in the earlier of these communications, I dare not make a free use of them; but I feel it my duty to record the strong impression they have left on my own mind of high generosity of affection, coupled with calm judgment, and perseverance in well-doing on the part of the stripling Scott. To these indeed every line in the collection bears pregnant testimony. A young gentleman, born of good family, and heir to a tolerable fortune, is sent to Edinburgh College, and is seen partaking, along with Scott, through several apparently happy and careless years, of the studies and amusements of which the reader may by this time have formed an adequate notion. By degrees, from the usual license of his equal comrades, he sinks into habits of a looser description—becomes reckless, contracts debts, irritates his own family almost beyond hope of reconciliation, is virtually cast off by them, runs away from Scotland, forms a marriage far below his condition in a remote part of the sister kingdom—and, when the poor girl has made him a father, then first begins to open his eyes to the full consequences of his mad career. He appeals to Scott, by this time in his eighteenth year, 'as the truest and noblest of friends,' who had given him 'the earliest and the strongest warnings,' had assisted him 'the most generously throughout all his wanderings and distresses,' and will not now abandon him in his 'penitent lowliness of misery,' the result of his seeing 'virtue and innocence involved in the punishment of his errors.' I find Scott obtaining the slow and reluctant assistance of his own careful father,—who had long before observed this youth's wayward disposition, and often cautioned his son against the connexion,—to intercede with the unfortunate wanderer's family, and procure, if possible, some mitigation of their sentence. The result is, that he is furnished with the scanty means of removing himself to a distant colony, where he spends several years in the drudgery of a very humble occupation, but by degrees establishes for himself a new character, which commands the anxious interest of strangers;—and I find these strangers, particularly a benevolent and venerable clergyman, addressing, on his behalf, without his privacy, the young person, as yet unknown to the world, whom the object of their concern had painted to them as 'uniting the warm feelings of youth with the sense of years'—whose hair he had, 'from the day he left England, worn next his heart.' Just at the time when this appeal reached Scott, he hears that his exiled friend's father has died suddenly, and after all intestate; he has actually been taking steps to ascertain the truth of the case at the moment when the American despatch is laid on his table. I leave the reader to guess with what pleasure Scott has to communicate the intelligence that his repentant and reformed friend may return to take possession of his inheritance. The letters before me contain touching pictures of their meeting—of Walter's first visit to the ancient hall, where a happy family are now assembled—and of the affectionately respectful sense which his friend retained ever afterwards of all that he had done for him in the season of his struggles. But what a grievous loss is Scott's part of this correspondence! I find this correspondent over and over again expressing his admiration of the letters in which Scott described to him his early tours both in the Highlands and the Border dales: I find him prophesying from them, as early as 1789, 'one day your pen will make you famous,'—and already, in 1790, urging him to concentrate his ambition on a 'history of the clans.'*

This young gentleman appears to have had a decided turn for literature; and, though in his earlier epistles he makes no allusion to Scott as ever dabbling in rhyme, he often inserts verses of his own, some of which are not without merit. There is a long letter in doggerel, dated 1788, descriptive of a ramble from Edinburgh to Carlisle—of which I may quote the opening lines, as a sample of the simple habits of these young people.

"At four in the morning, I won't be too sure,
Yet, if right I remember me, that was the hour,
When with Fergusson, Ramsay, and Jones, sir, and you,
From Auld Reekie I southward my route did pursue.
But two of the dogs (yet God bless them, I said)
Grew tired, and but set me half way to Lasswade,
While Jones, you and I, Wat, went on without flutter,
And at Symonds's feasted on good bread and butter;
Where I, wanting a sixpence, you lugged out a shilling,
And paid for me too, though I was most unwilling.
We parted—be sure I was ready to snivel—
Jones and you to go home—I to go to the devil."

In a letter of later date, describing the adventurer's captivation with the cottage maiden whom he afterwards married, there are some lines of a very different stamp. This couplet at least seems to me exquisite:—

"Lowly beauty, dear friend, beams with primitive grace,
And 'tis innocence self plays the rogue in her face."

I find in another letter of this collection—and it is among the first of the series—the following passage:—"Your Quixotism, dear Walter, was highly characteristic. From the description of the blooming fair, as she appeared when she lowered her *manteau vert*, I am hopeful you have not dropt the acquaintance. At least I am certain some of our more rakish friends would have been glad enough of such an introduction." This hint I cannot help connecting with the first scene of *The Lady Green Mantle* in Redgauntlet; but indeed I could easily trace many more coincidences between these letters and that novel, though at the same time I have no sort of doubt that William Clerk was, in the main, *Darsie Latimer*, while Scott himself unquestionably sat for his own picture in young *Alan Fairford*.

The allusion to 'our more rakish friends' is in keeping with the whole strain of this juvenile correspondence. Throughout there occurs no coarse or even jocular suggestion as to the conduct of *Scott* in that particular, as to which most youths of his then age are so apt to lay up stores of self-reproach. In this season of hot and impetuous blood he may not have escaped quite blameless, but I have the concurrent testimony of all the most intimate among his surviving associates, that he was remarkably free from such indiscretions; that while his high sense of honour shielded him from the remotest dream of tampering with female innocence, he had an instinctive delicacy about him which made him recoil with utter disgust from low and vulgar debaucheries. His friends, I have heard more than one of them confess, used often to rally him on the coldness of his nature. By degrees they discovered that he had from almost the dawn of the passions, cherished a secret attachment, which continued, through all the most perilous stage of life, to act as a romantic charm in safeguard of virtue. This—(however he may have disguised the story by mixing it up with the Quixotic adventure of the damsel in the Green Mantle)—this was the early and innocent affection to which we owe the tenderest pages, not only of Redgauntlet, but of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, and of Rokeby. In all of these works the heroine has certain distinctive features, drawn from one and the same haunting dream of his manly adolescence.

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* All Scott's letters to the friend here alluded to are said to have perished in an accidental fire.

It was about 1790, according to Mr. William Clerk, that Scott was observed to lay aside that carelessness, not to say slovenliness, as to dress, which used to furnish matter for joking at the beginning of their acquaintance. He now did himself more justice in these little matters, became fond of mixing in general female society, and, as his friend expresses it, 'began to set up for a squire of dames.'

His personal appearance at this time was not unengaging. A lady of high rank, who well remembers him in the Old Assembly Rooms, says, 'Young Walter Scott was a comely creature.' He had outgrown the sallowness of early ill health, and had a fresh brilliant complexion. His eyes were clear, open, and well set, with a changeful radiance, to which teeth of the most perfect regularity and whiteness lent their assistance, while the noble expanse and elevation of the brow gave to the whole aspect a dignity far above the charm of mere features. His smile was always delightful; and I can easily fancy the peculiar intermixture of tenderness and gravity, with playful innocent hilarity and humour in the expression, as being well calculated to fix a fair lady's eye. His figure, excepting the blemish in one limb, must in those days have been eminently handsome; tall, much above the usual standard, it was cast in the very mould of a young Hercules, the head set on with singular grace, the throat and chest after the truest model of the antique, the hands delicately finished, the whole outline that of extraordinary vigour, without as yet a touch of clumsiness. When he had acquired a little facility of manner, his conversation must have been such as could have dispensed with any exterior advantages, and certainly brought swift forgiveness for the one unkindness of nature. I have heard him, in talking of this part of his life, say, with an arch simplicity of look and tone which those who were familiar with him can fill in for themselves,—'It was a proud night with me when I first found that a pretty young woman could think it worth her while to sit and talk with me, hour after hour, in a corner of the ball-room, while all the world were capering in our view.'

I believe, however, that the 'pretty young woman' here specially alluded to had occupied his attention long before he ever appeared in the Edinburgh Assembly Rooms, or any of his friends took note of him as 'setting up for a squire of dames.' I have been told that their acquaintance began in the Greyfriars' Churchyard, where rain beginning to fall one Sunday as the congregation were dispersing, Scott happened to offer his umbrella, and the tender being accepted, so escorted her to her residence, which proved to be at no great distance from his own. To return from church together had, it seems, grown into something like a custom, before they met in society, Mrs. Scott being of the party. It then appeared that she and the lady's mother had been companions in their youth, though, both living secludedly, they had scarcely seen each other for many years; and the two matrons now renewed their former intercourse. But no acquaintance appears to have existed between the fathers of the young couple, until things had advanced in appearance further than met the approbation of the good Clerk to the Signet.

Being aware that the young lady, who was very highly connected, had prospects of fortune far above his son's, the upright and honourable man conceived it his duty to give her parents warning that he observed a degree of intimacy which, if allowed to go on, might involve the parties in future pain and disappointment. He had heard his son talk of a contemplated excursion to the part of the country in which his neighbour's estates lay, and not doubting that Walter's real object was different from that which he announced, introduced himself with a frank statement that he wished no such affair to proceed without the express sanction of those most interested in the happiness of persons as yet too young to calculate consequences for themselves. The northern Baronet had heard nothing of the young apprentice's intended excursion, and appeared to treat the whole business very lightly. He thanked Mr. Scott for his scrupulous attention—but added, that he believed he was mistaken; and this paternal interference, which Walter did not hear of till long afterwards, produced no change in his relations with the object of his growing attachment.

I have neither the power nor the wish to give in detail the sequel of this story. It is sufficient to say, that after he had through several long years nourished the dream of an ultimate union with this lady, his hopes terminated in her being married to a gentleman of the highest character, to whom some affectionate allusions occur in one of the greatest of his works, and who lived to act the part of a most generous friend to his early rival throughout the anxieties and distresses of 1826 and 1827. I have said enough for my purpose—which was only to render intelligible a few allusions in the letters which I shall by and by have to introduce; but I may add, that I have no doubt this unfortunate passion, besides one good effect already adverted to, had a powerful influence in nerving Scott's mind for the sedulous diligence with which he pursued his proper legal studies, as described in his Memoir, during the two or three years that preceded his call to the bar.

CHAPTER VI.

ILLUSTRATIONS CONTINUED—STUDIES FOR THE BAR—EXCURSIONS TO NORTHUMBERLAND—LETTER ON FLODDEN FIELD—CALL TO THE BAR—1790-1792.

THE two following letters may sufficiently illustrate the writer's everyday existence in the autumn of 1790. The first, addressed to his *fidus Achates*, has not a few indications of the vein of humour from which he afterwards drew so largely in his novels; and indeed, even in his last days, he delighted to tell the story of the Jedburgh bailies' boots.

" *To William Clerk, Esq., at John Clerk's, Esq. of Eldin, Prince's Street, Edinburgh.*

" Rosebank, 6th August, 1790.

" Dear William,

" Here am I, the weather, according to your phrase, most bitchiferous; the Tweed within twenty yards of the window at which I am writing, swelled from bank to brae, and roaring like thunder. It is paying you but a poor compliment to tell you I waited for such a day to perform my promise of writing, but you must consider that it is the point here to reserve such within doors' employment as we think most agreeable for bad weather, which in the country always wants something to help it away. In fair weather we are far from wanting amusement, which at present is my business; on the contrary, every fair day has some plan of pleasure annexed to it, in so much that I can hardly believe I have been here above two days, so swiftly does the time pass away. You will ask how it is employed. Why, negatively, I read *no* civil law. Heineccius and his fellow worthies have ample time to gather a venerable coat of dust, which they merit by their dullness. As to my positive amusements, besides riding, fishing, and the other usual sports of the country, I often spend an hour or two in the evening in shooting herons, which are numerous in that part of the river. To do this I have no farther to go than the bottom of our garden, which literally hangs over the river. When you fire at a bird she always crosses the river, and when again shot at with ball, usually returns to your side, and will cross in this way several times before she takes wing. This furnishes fine sport, nor are they easily shot, as you never can get very near them. The intervals between their appearing is spent very agreeably in eating gooseberries.

" Yesterday was St. James's Fair, a day of great business. There was a great show of black cattle—I mean of ministers; the narrowness of their stipends here obliges many of them to enlarge their incomes by taking farms and grazing cattle. This, in my opinion, diminishes their respectability, nor can the farmer be supposed to entertain any great reverence for the ghostly advice of a *pastor* (they literally deserve the epithet), who perhaps the day before overreached him in a bargain. I would not have you to suppose there are no exceptions to this character, but it would serve most of them. I had been fishing with my uncle, Captain Scott, on the Teviot, and returned through the ground where the Fair is kept. The servant was waiting there with our horses, as we were to ride the water. Lucky it was that it was so; for just about that time the magistrates of Jedburgh, who preside there, began their solemn procession through the Fair. For the greater dignity upon this occasion, they had a pair of boots among three men—*i. e.*, as they ride three in a rank, the *outer* legs of those personages who formed the outside, as it may be called, the procession, were each clothed in a boot. This and several other incongruous appearances, were thrown in the teeth of those cavaliers by the Kelso populace, and by the assistance of whiskey, parties were soon inflamed to a very tight battle, of one of that kind which, for distinction sake, is called royal. It was not without great difficulty that we extricated ourselves from the confusion; and had we been on foot, we might have been trampled down by these fierce Jedburghians, who charged like so many troopers. We were spectators of the combat from an eminence, but peace was soon after restored, which made the older warriors regret the effeminacy of the age, as, regularly, it ought to have lasted till night. Two lives were lost, I mean of horses; indeed, had you seen them, you would rather have wondered that they were able to bear their masters to the scene of action, than that they could not carry them off.

"I am ashamed to read over this sheet of nonsense, so excuse inaccuracies. Remember me to the lads of the Literary, those of *the club* in particular. I wrote Irving. Remember my most respectful compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Clerk and family, particularly James; when you write, let me know how he did when you heard of him. Imitate me in writing a long letter, but not in being long in writing it. Direct to me at Miss Scott's, Garden, Kelso. My letters lie there for me, as it saves their being sent down to Rosebank. The carrier puts up at the Grassmarket, and goes away on Wednesday forenoon. Yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The next letter is dated from a house at which I have often seen the writer in his latter days. Kippilaw, situated about five or six miles behind Abbotsford, on the high ground between the Tweed and the Water of Ayle, is the seat of an ancient laird of the clan Kerr, but was at this time tenanted by the family of Walter's brother-apprentice, James Ramsay, who afterwards realized a fortune in the civil service of the East India Company at Ceylon.

To William Clerk, Esq.

Kippilaw, Sept. 3, 1790.

"Dear Clerk,

"I am now writing from the country habitation of our friend Ramsay, where I have been spending a week as pleasantly as ever I spent one in my life. Imagine a commodious old house, pleasantly situated amongst a knot of venerable elms, in a fine sporting, open country, and only two miles from an excellent water for trouts, inhabited by two of the best old ladies (Ramsay's aunts), and three as pleasant young ones (his sisters) as any person would wish to converse with—and you will have some idea of Kippilaw. James and I wander about, fish, or look for hares, the whole day, and at night laugh, chat, and play round games at cards. Such is the fatherland in which I have been living for some days past, and which I leave to-night or to-morrow. This day is very bad; notwithstanding which, James has sallied out to make some calls, as he soon leaves the country. I have a great mind to trouble him with the care of this.

"And now for your letter, the receipt of which I have not, I think, yet acknowledged, though I am much obliged to you for it. I dare say you would relish your jaunt to Pennycuick very much, especially considering the solitary desert of Edinburgh, from which it relieved you. By the by, know, O thou devourer of grapes, who contemnest the vulgar gooseberry, that thou art not singular in thy devouring —*nec tam aversus equos sol jungit ab urbe* (*Kelsonianâ scilicet*)—my uncle being the lawful possessor of a vinery, measuring no less than twenty-four feet by twelve, the contents of which came often in my way; and, according to the proverb, that enough is as good as a feast, are equally acceptable as if they came out of the most extensive vineyard in France. I cannot, however, equal your boast of breakfasting, dining, and supping on them. As for the civilians*—peace be with them, and may the dust lie light upon their heads—they deserve this prayer in return for those sweet slumbers which their benign influence infuses into their readers. I fear I shall too soon be forced to disturb them, for some of our family being now at Kelso, I am under the agonies lest I be obliged to escort them into town. The only pleasure I shall reap by this is that of asking you how you do, and, perhaps, the solid advantage of completing our studies before the College sits down. Employ, therefore, your mornings in slumber while you can, for soon it will be chased from your eyes. I plume myself on my sagacity with regard to C. J. Fox.* I always foretold you would tire of him—a vile brute. I have not yet forgot the narrow escape of my fingers. I rejoice at James's† intimacy with Miss Menzies. She promised to turn out a fine girl, has a fine fortune, and could James get her, he might sing, "I 'll go no more to sea, to sea." Give my love to him when you write.—'God preserve us, what a scrawl!' says one of the ladies just now, in admiration at the expedition with which I scribble. Well—I was never able in my life to do any thing with what is called gravity and deliberation.

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* Books on Civil Law.

"I dined two days ago *tête à tête* with Lord Buchan. Heard a history of all his ancestors whom he has hung round his chimney-piece. From counting of pedigrees, good Lord deliver us! He is thinking of erecting a monument to Thomson. He frequented Dryburgh much in my grandfather's time. It will be a handsome thing. As to your scamp of a boy, I saw nothing of him; but the face is enough to condemn there. I have seen a man flogg'd for stealing spirits on the sole information of his nose. Remember me respectfully to all your family.

"Believe me yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

After his return from the scene of these merry doings, he writes as follows to his kind uncle. The reader will see that, in the course of the preceding year, he had announced his early views of the origin of what is called the feudal system in a paper read before *the Literary Society*. He, in the succeeding winter, chose the same subject for an essay, submitted to Mr. Dugald Stewart, whose prelections on ethics he was then attending. Some time later he again illustrated the same opinions more at length in a disquisition before the Speculative Society; and, indeed, he always adhered to them. One of the last historical books he read, before leaving Abbotsford for Malta in 1831, was Colonel Tod's interesting account of Rajasthan; and I well remember the delight he expressed on finding his views confirmed, as they certainly are in a very striking manner, by the philosophical soldier's details of the structure of society in that remote region of the East.

"*To Captain Robert Scott, Rosebank, Kelso.*

Edinburgh, September, 1790.

"Dear Uncle,

"We arrived here without any accident about five o'clock on Monday evening. The good weather made our journey pleasant. I have been attending to your commissions here, and find that the last volume of Dodsley's Annual Register published is that of 1787, which I was about to send you; but the bookseller I frequent had not one in boards, though he expects to procure one for me. There is a new work of the same title and size, on the same plan, which, being published every year regularly, has almost cut out Dodsley's, so that this last is expected to stop altogether. You will let me know if you would wish to have the new work, which is a good one, will join very well with those volumes of Dodsley's, which you already have, and is published up to the present year. Byron's Narrative is not yet published, but you shall have it whenever it comes out.

"Agreeable to your permission, I send you the scroll copy of an essay on the origin of the feudal system, written for the Literary Society last year. As you are kind enough to interest yourself in my style and manner of writing, I thought you might like better to see it in its original state, than one on the polishing of which more time had been bestowed. You will see that the intention and attempt of the essay is principally to controvert two propositions laid down by the writers on the subject;—1st, That the system was invented by the Lombards; and, 2dly, that its foundation depended on the king's being acknowledged the sole lord of all the lands in the country, which he afterwards distributed to be held by military tenures. I have endeavoured to assign it a more general origin, and to prove that it proceeds upon principles common to all nations when placed in a certain situation. I am afraid the matter will but poorly reward the trouble you will find in reading some parts. I hope, however, you will make out enough to enable you to favour me with your sentiments upon its faults. There is none whose advice I prize so high, for there is none in whose judgment I can so much confide, or who has shown me so much kindness.

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* A tame fox of Mr. Clerk's, which he soon dismissed.

† Mr. James Clerk, R. N.

"I also send, as amusement for an idle half hour, a copy of the regulations of our Society, some of which will, I think, be favoured with your approbation.

"My mother and sister join in compliments to aunt and you, and also in thanks for the attentions and hospitality which they experienced at Rosebank. And I am ever your affectionate nephew,

Walter Scott.

"P. S.—If you continue to want a mastiff, I think I can procure you one of a good breed, and send him by the carrier."

While attending Mr. Dugald Stewart's class, in the winter of 1790–1, Scott produced, in compliance with the usual custom of ethical students, several essays besides that to which we have already made an allusion, and which was, I believe, entitled, "On the Manners and Customs of the Northern Nations." But this essay it was that first attracted, in any particular manner, his professor's attention. Mr. Robert Ainslie, well known as the friend and fellow traveller of Burns, happened to attend Stewart the same session, and remembers his saying *ex cathedrâ*, "The author of this paper shows much knowledge of his subject, and a great taste for such researches." Scott became, before the close of the session, a frequent visiter in Mr. Stewart's family, and an affectionate intercourse was maintained between them through their after-lives.

Let me here set down a little story which most of his friends must have heard him tell of the same period. While attending Dugald Stewart's lectures on moral philosophy, Scott happened to sit frequently beside a modest and diligent youth, considerably his senior, and obviously of very humble condition. Their acquaintance soon became rather intimate, and he occasionally made this new friend the companion of his country walks, but as to his parentage and place of residence he always preserved total silence. One day, towards the end of the session, as Scott was returning to Edinburgh from a solitary ramble, his eye was arrested by a singularly venerable *Bluegown*, a beggar of the Edie Ochiltree order, who stood propped on his stick, with his hat in his hand, but silent and motionless, at one of the outskirts of the city. Scott gave the old man what trifle he had in his pocket, and passed on his way. Two or three times afterwards the same thing happened, and he had begun to consider the Bluegown as one who had established a claim on his bounty; when one day he fell in with him as he was walking with his humble student. Observing some confusion in his companion's manner as he saluted his pensioner, and bestowed the usual benefaction, he could not help saying, after they had proceeded a few yards further, 'Do you know any thing to the old man's discredit?' Upon which the youth burst into tears, and cried, 'O no, sir, God forbid—but I am a poor wretch to be ashamed to speak to him—he is my own father. He has enough laid by to serve for his own old days, but he stands bleaching his head in the wind, that he may get the means of paying for my education.' Compassionating the young man's situation, Scott soothed his weakness, and kept his secret, but by no means broke off the acquaintance. Some months had elapsed before he again met the Bluegown—it was in a retired place, and the old man begged to speak a word with him. 'I find, sir,' he said, 'that you have been very kind to my Willie. He had often spoke of it before I saw you together. Will you pardon such a liberty, and give me the honour and pleasure of seeing you under my poor roof? To-morrow is Saturday, will you come at two o'clock? Willie has not been very well, and it would do him meikle good to see your face.' His curiosity, besides better feelings, was touched, and he accepted this strange invitation. The appointed hour found him within sight of a sequestered little cottage, near St. Leonard's—the hamlet where he has placed the residence of his David Deans. His fellow-student, pale and emaciated from recent sickness, was seated on a stone bench by the door, looking out for his coming, and introduced him into a not untidy cabin, where the old man, divested of his professional garb, was directing the last vibrations of a leg of mutton that hung by a hempen cord before the fire. The mutton was excellent—so were the potatoes and whiskey; and Scott returned home from an entertaining conversation, in which, besides telling many queer stories of his own life—and he had seen service in his youth—the old man more than once used an expression, which was long afterwards put into the mouth of Dominie Sampson's mother:—'Please God, I may live to see my bairn wag his head in a pulpit yet.'

Walter could not help telling all this the same night to his mother, and added, that he would fain see his poor friend obtain a tutor's place in some gentleman's family. 'Dinna speak to your father about it,' said the good lady; 'if it had been *a shoulder* he might have thought less, but he will say *the jigot* was a sin. I'll see what I can do.' Mrs. Scott made her inquiries in her own way among the professors, and, having satisfied herself as to the young man's character, applied to her favourite minister, Dr. Erskine, whose influence soon procured him such a situation as had been suggested for him, in the north of Scotland. 'And thenceforth,' said Sir Walter, 'I lost sight of my friend—but let us hope he made out his *curriculum* at Aberdeen, and is now wagging his head where the fine old carle wished to see him.'*

On the 14th January, 1791, Scott was admitted a member of *The Speculative Society*, where it had, long before, been the custom of those about to be called to the bar, and those who, after assuming the gown, were left in possession of leisure by the solicitors, to train or exercise themselves in the arts of elocution and debate. From time to time each member produces an essay, and his treatment of his subject is then discussed by the conclave. Scott's essays were, for November 1791, 'On the Origin of the Feudal System;' for the 14th February, 1792, 'On the Authenticity of Ossian's Poems;' and on the 11th December of the same year, he read one 'On the Origin of the Scandinavian Mythology.' The selection of these subjects shows the course of his private studies and predilections; but he appears, from the minutes, to have taken his fair share in the ordinary debates of the Society,—and spoke, in the spring of 1791, on these questions, which all belong to the established text-book for juvenile speculation in Edinburgh:—'Ought any permanent support to be provided for the poor?' 'Ought there to be an established religion?' 'Is attainder and corruption of blood ever a proper punishment?' 'Ought the public expenses to be defrayed by levying the amount directly upon the people, or is it expedient to contract national debt for that purpose?' 'Was the execution of Charles I. justifiable?' 'Should the slave-trade be abolished?' In the next session, previous to his call to the bar, he spoke in the debates, of which these were the theses:—'Has the belief in a future state been of advantage to mankind, or is it ever likely to be so?' 'Is it for the interest of Britain to maintain what is called the balance of Europe?' and again on the eternal question as to the fate of King Charles I., which, by the way was thus set up for re-discussion on a motion by Walter Scott.

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* The reader will find a story not unlike this in the Introduction to the "Antiquary," 1830. When I first read that note, I asked him why he had altered so many circumstances from the usual oral edition of his anecdote. "Nay," said he, "both stories may be true, and why should I be always lugging in myself, when what happened to another of our class would serve equally well for the purpose I have in view?" I regretted the *leg of mutton*.

He took, for several winters, an ardent interest in this society. Very soon after his admission (18th January, 1791), he was elected their librarian; and in the November following he became also their secretary and treasurer; all which appointments indicate the reliance placed on his careful habits of business, the fruit of his chamber education. The minutes kept in his hand-writing attest the strict regularity of his attention to the small affairs, literary and financial, of the club; but they show also, as do all his early letters, a strange carelessness in spelling. His constant good temper softened the asperities of debate; while his multifarious lore, and the quaint humour with which he enlivened its display, made him more a favourite as a speaker than some whose powers of rhetoric were far above his.

Lord Jeffrey remembers being struck, the first night he spent at the Speculative, with the singular appearance of the secretary, who sat gravely at the bottom of the table in a huge woollen night-cap; and when the president took the chair, pleaded a bad toothache as his apology for coming into that worshipful assembly in such a "portentous machine." He read that night an essay on ballads, which so much interested the new member, that he requested to be introduced to him. Mr. Jeffrey called on him next evening, and found him 'in a small den, on the sunk floor of his father's house, in George's Square, surrounded with dingy books,' from which they adjourned to a tavern, and supped together. Such was the commencement of an acquaintance, which by degrees ripened into friendship, between the two most distinguished men of letters whom Edinburgh produced in their time. I may add here the description of that early *den*, with which I am favoured by a lady of Scott's family. 'Walter had soon begun to collect out-of-the-way things of all sorts. He had more books than shelves; a small painted cabinet, with Scotch and Roman coins in it, and so forth. A claymore and Lochaber axe, given him by old Invernahyle, mounted guard on a little print of Prince Charlie; and *Broughton's Saucer* was hooked up against the wall below it.' Such was the germ of the magnificent library and museum of Abbotsford; and such were the 'new realms' in which he, on taking possession, had arranged his little paraphernalia about him 'with all the feelings of novelty and liberty.' Since those days the habits of life in Edinburgh, as elsewhere, have undergone many changes; and the 'convenient parlour,' in which Scott first showed Jeffrey his collections of minstrelsy, is now, in all probability, thought hardly good enough for a menial's sleeping-room.

But I have forgotten to explain *Broughton's Saucer*. We read of Mr. Saunders Fairford, that though 'an elder of the kirk, and of course zealous for king George and the Government,' yet, having 'many clients and connexions of business among families of opposite political tenets, he was particularly cautious to use all the conventional phrases which the civility of the time had devised as an admissible mode of language betwixt the two parties. Thus he spoke sometimes of the Chevalier, but never either of the *Prince*, which would have been sacrificing his own principles, or of *the Pretender*, which would have been offensive to those of others. Again, he usually designated the Rebellion as the *affair* of 1745, and spoke of any one engaged in it as a person who had been *out* at a certain period—so that, on the whole, he was much liked and respected on all sides.'* All this was true of Mr. Walter Scott, W. S.; but I have often heard his son tell an anecdote of him which he dwelt on with particular satisfaction, as illustrative of the man, and of the difficult time through which he had lived.

Mrs. Scott's curiosity was strongly excited one autumn by the regular appearance, at a certain hour every evening, of a sedan chair, to deposit a person carefully muffled up in a mantle, who was immediately ushered into her husband's private room, and commonly remained with him there until long after the usual bed-time of this orderly family. Mr. Scott answered her repeated inquiries with a vagueness which irritated the lady's feelings more and more; until, at last, she could bear the thing no longer; but one evening, just as she heard the bell ring for the stranger's chair to carry him off, she made her appearance within the forbidden parlour with a salver in her hand, observing, that she thought the gentlemen had sat so long they would be the better of a dish of tea, and had ventured accordingly to bring some for their acceptance. The stranger, a person of distinguished appearance, and richly dressed, bowed to the lady, and accepted a cup; but her husband knit his brows and refused very coldly to partake the refreshment. A moment afterwards the visitor withdrew—and Mr. Scott, lifting up the window-sash, took the cup, which he had left empty on the table, and tossed it out upon the pavement. The lady exclaimed for her china, but was put to silence by her husband's saying, "I can forgive your little curiosity, madam, but you must pay the penalty. I may admit into my house, on a piece of business, persons wholly unworthy to be treated as guests by my wife. Neither lip of me nor of mine comes after Mr. Murray of Broughton's."

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* Redgauntlet, vol. i. p. 244.

This was the unhappy man who, after attending Prince Charles Stuart as his secretary throughout the greater part of his expedition, condescended to redeem his own life and fortune by bearing evidence against the noblest of his late master's adherents, when

> "Pitied by gentle hearts Kilmarnock died—
> The brave, Balmerino, were on thy side."

When first confronted with the last named peer before the Privy Council in St. James's, the prisoner was asked "do you know this witness, my lord?" "Not I," answered Balmerino; "I once knew a person who bore the designation of Murray of Broughton—but that was a gentleman and a man of honour, and one that could hold up his head."

The saucer belonging to Broughton's teacup had been preserved; and Walter, at a very early period, made prize of it. One can fancy young Allan Fairford pointing significantly to the relic when Mr. Saunders was vouchsafing him one of his customary lectures about listening with unseemly sympathy to "the blawing, bleezing stories which the Hieland gentlemen told of those troublous times."*

The following letter is the only one of the autumn of 1791 that has reached my hands. It must be read with particular interest, for its account of Scott's first visit to Flodden field, destined to be celebrated seventeen years afterwards in the very noblest specimen of his numbers.

"*To William Clerk, Esq. Prince's Street, Edinburgh.*

"Northumberland, 26th August, 1791.

"Dear Clerk,

"Behold a letter from the mountains, for I am very snugly settled here, in a farmer's house, about six miles from Wooler, in the very centre of the Cheviot hills, in one of the wildest and most romantic situations which your imagination, fertile upon the subject of cottages, ever suggested. And what the deuce are you about there? methinks I hear you say. Why, sir, of all things in the world—drinking goat's whey—not that I stand in the least need of it, but my uncle having a slight cold, and being a little tired of home, asked me last Sunday evening if I would like to go with him to Wooler, and I answering in the affirmative, next morning's sun beheld us on our journey, through a pass in the Cheviots, upon the back of two special nags, and man Thomas behind with a portmanteau, and two fishing rods fastened across his back, much in the style of St. Andrew's Cross. Upon reaching Wooler we found the accommodations so bad that we were forced to use some interest to get lodgings here, where we are most delightfully appointed indeed. To add to my satisfaction, we are amidst places renowned by the feats of former days; each hill is crowned with a tower, a camp, a cairn, and in no situation can you be near more fields of battle: Flodden, Otterburn, Chevy Chase, Ford Castle, Chillingham Castle, Copland Castle, and many another scene of blood are within the compass of a forenoon's ride. Out of the brooks with which these hills are intersected we pull trouts of half a yard in length, as fast as we did the perches from the pond at Pennycuick, and we are in the very country of muirfowl.

"Often as I have wished for your company, I never did it more earnestly than when I rode over Flodden Edge. I know your taste for these things, and could have undertaken to demonstrate, that never was an affair more completely bungled than that day's work was. Suppose one army posted upon the face of a hill, and secured by high grounds projecting on each flank, with the river Till in front, a deep and still river, winding through a very extensive valley called Milfield Plain, and the only passage over it by a narrow bridge, which the Scots artillery, from the hill, could in a moment have demolished. Add that the English must have hazarded a battle while their troops, which were tumultuously levied, remained together; and that the Scots, behind whom the country was open to Scotland, had nothing to do but to wait for the attack as they were posted. Yet did two thirds of the army, actuated by the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum*, rush down and give an opportunity to Stanley to occupy the ground they had quitted, by coming over the shoulder of the hill, while the other third, under Lord Home, kept their ground, and having seen their King and about 10,000 of their countrymen cut to pieces, retired into Scotland without loss. For the reason of the bridge not being destroyed while the English passed, I refer you to Pitscottie, who narrates at large, and to whom I give credit for a most accurate and clear description, agreeing perfectly with the ground.

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* Redgauntlet, vol. i. p. 142.

"My uncle drinks the whey here, as I do ever since I understood it was brought to his bedside every morning at six, by a very pretty dairy-maid. So much for my residence; all the day we shoot, fish, walk, and ride; dine and sup upon fish struggling from the stream, and the most delicious heath-fed mutton, barn-door fowls, poys,* milk-cheese, &c., all in perfection; and so much simplicity resides among these hills, that a pen, which could write at least, was not to be found about the house, though belonging to a considerable farmer, till I shot the crow with whose quill I write this epistle. I wrote to Irving before leaving Kelso. Poor fellow, I am sure his sister's death must have hurt him much; though he makes no noise about feelings, yet still streams always run deepest. I sent a message by him to Edie,† poor devil, adding my mite of consolation to him in his affliction. I pity poor * * * * * *, who is more deserving of compassion, being his first offence. Write soon, and as long as the last; you will have Perthshire news I suppose soon. Jamie's adventure diverted me much. I read it to my uncle, who being long in the India service, was affronted. Remember to James when you write, and to all your family and friends in general. I send this to Kelso—you may address as usual; my letters will be forwarded—adieu—au revoir,

WALTER SCOTT."

With the exception of this little excursion, Scott appears to have been nailed to Edinburgh during this autumn, by that course of legal study, in company with Clerk, on which he dwells in his Memoir with more satisfaction than on any other passage in his early life. He copied out *twice*, as the Fragment tells us, his notes of those lectures of the eminent Scots law professor (afterwards Mr. Baron Hume), which he speaks of in such a high strain of eulogy; and Mr. Irving adds, that the second copy, being fairly finished and bound into volumes, was presented to his father. The old gentleman was highly gratified with this performance, not only as a satisfactory proof of his son's assiduous attention to the Law Professor, but inasmuch as the lectures afforded himself 'very pleasant reading for leisure hours.'

Mr. Clerk assures me, that nothing could be more exact (excepting as to a few petty circumstances introduced for obvious reasons) than the resemblance of the Mr. Saunders Fairford of Redgauntlet to his friend's father:—"He was a man of business of the old school, moderate in his charges, economical, and even niggardly in his expenditure; strictly honest in conducting his own affairs and those of his clients;

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* Pies.

† Sir A. Fergusson.

but taught by long experience to be wary and suspicious in observing the motions of others. Punctual as the clock of St. Giles tolled nine" (the hour at which the Court of Session meets), "the dapper form of the hale old gentleman was seen at the threshold of the court hall, or at farthest, at the head of the Back Stairs" (the most convenient access to the Parliament House from George's Square), "trimly dressed in a complete suit of snuff-coloured brown, with stockings of silk or woollen, as suited the weather; a bob wig and a small cocked hat; shoes blacked as Warren would have blacked them; silver shoe-buckles, and a gold stock-buckle. His manners corresponded with his attire, for they were scrupulously civil, and not a little formal.... On the whole, he was a man much liked and respected, though his friends would not have been sorry if he had given a dinner more frequently, as his little cellar contained some choice old wine, of which, on such rare occasions, he was no niggard. The whole pleasure of this good old-fashioned man of method, besides that which he really felt in the discharge of his own daily business, was the hope to see his son attain what in the father's eyes was the proudest of all distinctions —the rank and fame of a well-employed lawyer. Every profession has its peculiar honours, and his mind was constructed upon so limited and exclusive a plan, that he valued nothing save the objects of ambition which his own presented. He would have shuddered at his son's acquiring the renown of a hero, and laughed with scorn at the equally barren laurels of literature; it was by the path of the law alone that he was desirous to see him rise to eminence; and the probabilities of success or disappointment, were the thoughts of his father by day, and his dream by night."*

It is easy to imagine the original of this portrait, writing to one of his friends, about the end of June 1792,—"I have the pleasure to tell you that my son has passed his private Scots law examinations with good approbation—a great relief to my mind, especially as worthy Mr. Pest told me in my ear, there was no fear of the 'callant,' as he familiarly called him, which gives me great heart. His public trials, which are nothing in comparison save a mere form, are to take place, by order of the Honourable Dean of Faculty,† on Wednesday first, and on Friday he puts on the gown, and gives a bit chack of dinner to his friends and acquaintances, as is the custom. Your company will be wished for there by more than him.—*P. S.*—His thesis is, on the title, '*De periculo et commodo rei venditæ*,' and is a very pretty piece of Latinity."‡

And all things passed in due order, even as they are figured. The real *Darsie* was present at the real Alan Fairford's 'bit chack of dinner,' and the old clerk of the Signet was very joyous on the occasion. Scott's *thesis* was, in fact, on the Title of the Pandects, Concerning the disposal of the dead bodies of criminals. It was dedicated, I doubt not by the careful father's advice, to his friend and neighbour in George's

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* Redgauntlet. vol. i. p. 243–5.

† The situation of Dean of Faculty was filled in 1792 by the Honourable Henry Erskine, of witty and benevolent memory.

‡ Redgauntlet, vol. i. p. 144.

Square, the coarsely humorous, but acute and able, and still well-remembered, Macqueen of Braxfield, then Lord Justice-Clerk (or President of the Supreme Criminal Court) of Scotland.

I have often heard both *Alan* and *Darsie* laugh over their reminiscences of the important day when they 'put on the gown.' After the ceremony was completed, and they had mingled for some time with the crowd of barristers in the outer Court, Scott said to his comrade, mimicking the air and tone of a Highland lass waiting at the cross of Edinburgh to be hired for the harvest work,—'We've stood here an hour by the Tron, hinny, and diel a ane has speered our price.' Some friendly solicitor, however, gave him a guinea fee before the Court rose; and as they walked down the High Street together, he said to Mr. Clerk, in passing a hosier's shop—'This is a sort of a wedding-day, Willie; I think I must go in and buy me a new night-cap.' He did so accordingly; perhaps this was Lord Jeffrey's 'portentous machine.' His first fee of any consequence, however, was expended on a silver taper-stand for his mother, which the old lady used to point to with great satisfaction, as it stood on her chimney-piece five-and-twenty years afterwards.

CHAPTER VII.

FIRST EXPEDITION INTO LIDDESDALE—STUDY OF GERMAN—POLITICAL TRIALS, &c.—SPECIMEN OF LAW PAPERS—BURGER'S LENORE TRANSLATED —DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE.—1792-1796.

Scott was called to the bar only the day before the closing of the session, and he appears to have almost immediately escaped to the country. On the 2d of August I find his father writing, "I have sent the copies of your *thesis* as desired;" and on the 15th he addressed to him at Rosebank a letter, in which there is this paragraph, an undoubted autograph of Mr. Saunders Fairford, *anno ætatis* sixty-three.

'Dear Walter,

'. . . I am glad that your expedition to the west proved agreeable. You do well to warn your mother against Ashestiel. Although I said little, yet I never thought that road could be agreeable; besides, it is taking too wide a circle. Lord Justice-Clerk is in town attending the Bills.* He called here yesterday, and enquired very particularly for you. I told him where you was, and he expects to see you at Jedburgh upon the 21st. He is to be at Mellerstain† on the 20th, and will be there all night. His Lordship said, in a very pleasant manner, that something might cast up at Jedburgh to give you an opportunity of appearing, and that he would insist upon it, and that in future he meant to give you a share of the criminal business in this Court, all which is very kind. I told His Lordship that I had dissuaded you from appearing at Jedburgh, but he said I was wrong in doing so, and I therefore leave the matter to you and him. *I think it is probable he will breakfast with Sir H. H. MacDougall on the* 21*st, on his way to Jedburgh.* * * *

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* The Judges then attended in Edinburgh in rotation during the intervals of term, to take care of various sorts of business which could not brook delay, bills of injunction, &c.

† The beautiful seat of the Baillies of Jerviswood, in Berwickshire, a few miles below Dryburgh.

This last quiet hint, that the young lawyer might as well be at Makerstoun (the seat of a relation) when *His Lordship* breakfasted there, and of course swell the train of His Lordship's little procession into the county town, seems delightfully characteristic. I think I hear Sir Walter himself lecturing *me*, when in the same sort of situation, thirty years afterwards. He declined, as one of the following letters will show, the opportunity of making his first appearance on this occasion at Jedburgh. He was present, indeed, at the court during the assizes, but "durst not venture." His accounts to William Clerk of his vacation amusements, and more particularly of his second excursion to Northumberland, will, I am sure, interest every reader.

'*To William Clerk, Esq. Advocate, Prince's Street, Edinburgh.*

Rosebank, 10th Sept. 1792.

'Dear William,

'Taking the advantage of a very indifferent day, which is likely to float away a good deal of corn, and of my father's leaving this place, who will take charge of this scrawl, I sit down to answer your favour. I find you have been, like myself, taking advantage of the good weather to look around you a little, and congratulate you upon the pleasure you must have received from your jaunt with Mr. Russell.[*] I apprehend, though you are silent upon the subject, that your conversation was enlivened by many curious disquisitions of the nature of *undulating exhalations.* I should have bowed before the venerable grove of oaks at Hamilton with as much respect as if I had been a Druid about to gather the sacred misletoe. I should hardly have suspected your host Sir William[†] of having been the occasion of the scandal brought upon the library and Mr. Gibb[‡] by the introduction of the Cabinet des Fées, of which I have a volume or two here. I am happy to think there is an admirer of *snug things* in the administration of the library. Poor Linton's[§] misfortune, though I cannot say it surprises, yet heartily grieves me. I have no doubt he will have many advisers and animadverters upon the naughtiness of his ways, whose admonitions will be forgot upon the next opportunity.

'I am lounging about the country here, to speak sincerely, as idle as the day is long. Two old companions of mine, brothers of Mr. Walker of Wooden, having come to this country, we have renewed a great intimacy. As they live directly upon the opposite bank of the river, we have signals agreed upon by which we concert a plan of operations for the day. They are both officers, and very intelligent young fellows, and what is of some consequence, have a brace of fine greyhounds. Yesterday forenoon we killed seven hares, so you may see how plenty the game is with us. I have turned a keen duck-shooter, though my success is not very great; and when wading through the mosses upon this errand, accoutred with the long gun, a jacket, musquito trowsers, and a rough cap, I might well pass for one of my redoubted moss-trooper progenitors, Walter Fire-the-Braes,[‖] or rather Willie wi' the Bolt-Foot.

'For about-doors amusement, I have constructed a seat in a large tree which spreads its branches horizontally over the Tweed. This is a favourite situation of mine for reading, especially in a day like this, when the west wind rocks the branches on which I am perched, and the river rolls its waves below me of a turbid blood colour. I have moreover, cut an embrasure, through which I can fire upon the gulls, herons, and cormorants, as they fly screaming past my nest. To crown the whole, I have carved an inscription upon it in the ancient Romant taste. I believe I shall hardly return into town, barring accidents, sooner than the middle of next month, perhaps not till November. Next week, weather permitting, is destined for a Northumberland expedition, in which I shall visit some parts of that country which I have not yet seen, particularly about Hexham. Some days ago I had nearly met with a worse accident than the tramp I took at Moorfoot;[*] for having bewildered myself among the Cheviot hills, it was nearly nightfall before I got to the village of Hownam, and the passes with which I was acquainted. You do not speak of being in Perthshire this season, though I suppose you intend it. I suppose we, that is *nous autres*,[†] are at present completely dispersed.

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[*] Mr. Russell, surgeon, afterwards Professor of Clinical Surgery at Edinburgh.

[†] Sir William Miller (Lord Glenlee).

[‡] Mr. Gibb was the Librarian of the Faculty of Advocates.

[§] Clerk, Abercromby, Scott, Fergusson, and others, had occasional boating excursions from Leith to Inchcolm, Inchkeith, &c.; on one of these their boat was neared by a Newhaven one—Fergusson, at the moment, was standing up talking; one of the Newhaven fishermen, taking him for a brother of his own craft, bawled out, "Linton, you lang bitch, is that you?" From that day Adam Fergusson's cognomen among his friends of *The Club* was LINTON.

[‖] Walter Scott of Synton (elder brother of *Bolt-Foot*, the first Baron of Harden) was thus designated. He greatly distinguished himself in the battle of Melrose, A. D. 1526.

'Compliments to all who are in town, and best respects to your own family, both in Prince's Street and at Eldin.—Believe me ever most sincerely yours,

WALTER SCOTT.'

" *To William Clerk, Esq.*

Rosebank, 30th Sept., 1792.

'Dear William,

'I suppose this will find you flourishing like a green bay-tree on the mountains of Perthshire, and in full enjoyment of all the pleasures of the country. All that I envy you is the *noctes cenæque deum*, which, I take it for granted, you three merry men will be spending together, while I am poring over Bartholine in the long evenings, solitary enough; for, as for the lobsters, as you call them, I am separated from them by the Tweed, which precludes evening meetings, unless in fine weather and full moons. I have had an expedition through Hexham and the higher parts of Northumberland, which would have delighted the very cockles of your heart, not so much on account of the beautiful romantic appearance of the country, though that would have charmed you also, as because you would have seen more Roman inscriptions built into gate-posts, barns, &c., than perhaps are to be found in any other part of Britain. These have been all dug up from the neighbouring Roman wall, which is still in many places very entire, and gives a stupendous idea of the perseverance of its founders, who carried such an erection from sea to sea, over rocks, mountains, rivers, and morasses. There are several lakes among the mountains above Hexham, well worth going many miles to see, though their fame is eclipsed by their neighbourhood to those of Cumberland. They are surrounded by old towers and castles, in situations the most savagely romantic; what would I have given to have been able to take effect-pieces from some of them! Upon the Tyne, about Hexham, the country has a different aspect, presenting much of the beautiful though less of the sublime. I was particularly charmed with the situation of Beaufront, a house belonging to a mad sort of genius whom, I am sure, I have told you some stories about. He used to call himself the Noble Errington, but of late has assumed the title of Duke of Hexham. Hard by the town is the field of battle where the forces of Queen Margaret were defeated by those of the House of York, a blow which the Red Rose never recovered during the civil wars. The spot where the Duke of Somerset and the northern nobility of the Lancastrian faction were executed after the battle is still called Dukesfield. The inhabitants of this country speak an odd dialect of the Saxon, approaching nearly that of Chaucer, and have retained some customs peculiar to themselves. They are the descendants of the ancient Danes, chased into the fastnesses of Northumberland by the severity of William the Conqueror. Their ignorance is surprising to a Scotchman. It is common for the traders in cattle, which business is carried on to a great extent, to carry all letters received in course of trade to the parish church, where the clerk reads them aloud after service, and answers them according to circumstances.

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[*] This alludes to being lost in a fishing excursion.

[†] The companions of *The Club*.

'We intended to visit the lakes in Cumberland, but our jaunt was cut short by the bad weather. I went to the circuit at Jedburgh, to make my bow to Lord J. Clerk, and might have had employment, but durst not venture. Nine of the Dunse rioters were condemned to banishment, but the ferment continues violent in the Merse. Kelso races afforded little sport—Wishaw[*] lost a horse which cost him £500, and foundered irrevocably on the course. At another time I should quote George Buchanan's adage of 'a fool and his money,' but at present labour under a similar misfortune; my Galloway having yesterday thought proper (N. B., without a rider) to leap over a gate, and being lamed for the present. This is not his first *faux-pas*, for he jumped into a water with me on his back when in Northumberland, to the imminent danger of my life. He is, therefore, to be sold (when recovered), and another purchased. This accident has occasioned you the trouble of reading so long an epistle, the day being Sunday, and my uncle, the captain, busily engaged with your father's naval tactics, is too seriously employed to be an agreeable companion. Apropos (des bottes)—I am sincerely sorry to hear that James is still unemployed, but have no doubt a time will come round when his talents will have an opportunity of being displayed to his advantage. I have no prospect of seeing my *chère adorable* till winter, if then. As for you, I pity you not, seeing as how you have so good a succedaneum in M. G.; and on the contrary, hope, not only that Edmonstone may *roast* you, but that Cupid may again (as erst) *fry* you on the gridiron of jealousy for your infidelity. Compliments to our right trusty and well-beloved Linton and Jean Jacques.[†] If you write, which, by the way, I hardly have the conscience to expect, direct to my father's care, who will forward your letter. I have quite given up duck-shooting for the season, the birds being too old and the mosses too deep and cold. I have no reason to boast of my experience or success in the sport, and for my own part, should fire at any distance under eighty or even ninety paces, though above forty-five I would reckon it a *coup désésperé*, and as the bird is beyond measure shy, you may be sure I was not very bloody. Believe me, deferring, *as usual*, our dispute till another opportunity, always sincerely yours,

WALTER SCOTT.'

'P. S.—I believe if my pony does not soon recover, that misfortune, with the bad weather, may send me soon to town.'

It was within a few days after Scott's return from his excursion to Hexham, that, while attending the Michaelmas head-court, as an annual county-meeting is called, at Jedburgh, he was introduced, by an old companion, Charles Kerr of Abbotrule, to Mr. Robert Shortreed, that gentleman's near relation, who spent the greater part of his life in the enjoyment of much respect as Sheriff-substitute of Roxburghshire. Scott had been expressing a wish to visit the then wild and inaccessible district of Liddesdale, particularly with the view to examine the ruins of the famous castle of Hermitage, and to pick up some of the ancient *riding ballads*, said to be still preserved among the descendants of the moss-troopers, who had followed the banner of the Douglases, when lords of that grim and remote fastness. Mr. Shortreed had many connexions in Liddesdale, and knew its passes well, and he was pointed out as the very guide the young advocate wanted. They started accordingly, in a day or two afterwards, from Abbotrule; and the laird meant to have been of the party; but 'it was well for him,' said Shortreed, 'that he changed his mind—for he could never have done as we did.'[‡]

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[*] William Hamilton of Wishaw,—who afterwards established his claim to the peerage of Belhaven.

[†] John James Edmonstone.

[‡] I am obliged to Mr. John Elliot Shortreed, a son of Scott's early friend, for some me-

During seven successive years Scott made a *raid*, as he called it, into Liddesdale, with Mr. Shortreed for his guide; exploring every rivulet to its soûrce, and every ruined *peel* from foundation to battlement. At this time no wheeled carriage had ever been seen in the district—the first, indeed that ever appeared there was a gig, driven by Scott himself for a part of his way, when on the last of these seven excursions. There was no inn nor public-house of any kind in the whole valley; the travellers passed from the shepherd's hut to the minister's manse, and again from the cheerful hospitality of the manse to the rough and jolly welcome of the homestead; gathering, wherever they went, songs and tunes, and occasionally more tangible relics of antiquity—even such 'a rowth of old knicknackets' as Burns ascribes tó Captain Grose. To these rambles Scott owed much of the materials of his 'Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border;' and not less of that intimate acquaintance with the living manners of these unsophisticated regions, which constitutes the chief charm of one of the most charming of his prose works. But how soon he had any definite object before him in his researches, seems very doubtful. 'He was *makin' himsell* a' the time,' said Mr. Shortreed; 'but he didna ken maybe what he was about till years had passed: At first he thought o' little, I dare say, but the queerness and the fun.'

'In those days,' says the Memorandum before me, 'advocates were not so plenty—at least about Liddesdale;' and the worthy Sheriff-substitute goes on to describe the sort of bustle, not unmixed with alarm, produced at the first farm-house they visited (Willie Elliot's at Millburnholm), when the honest man was informed of the quality of one of his guests. When they dismounted, accordingly, he received Mr. Scott with great ceremony, and insisted upon himself leading his horse to the stable. Shortreed accompanied Willie, however, and the latter, after taking a deliberate peep at Scott, 'out-by the edge of the door-cheek,' whispered 'Weel, Robin, I say, de'il hae me if I's be a bit feared for him now; he's just a chield like ourselves, I think.' Half-a-dozen dogs of all degrees had already gathered round 'the advocate,' and his way of returning their compliments had set Willie Elliot at once at his ease.

According to Mr. Shortreed, this good man of Millburnholm was the great original of Dandie Dinmont. As he seems to have been the first of these upland sheep-farmers that Scott ever visited, there can be little doubt that he sat for some parts of that inimitable portraiture; and it is certain that the James Davidson, who carried the name of Dandie to his grave with him, and whose thoroughbred deathbed scene is told in the Notes to Guy Mannering, was first pointed out to Scott by Mr. Shortreed himself, several years after the novel had established the man's celebrity all over the Border; some accidental report about his terriers, and their odd names, having alone been turned to account in the original composition of the tale. But I have the best reason to

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moranda of his father's conversations on this subject, which are the more interesting that they represent the worthy Sheriff-substitute's dialect exactly as it was. These notes were written in 1824; and I shall make several quotations from them. I had, however, many opportunities of hearing Mr. Shortreed's stories from his own lips, having often been under his hospitable roof in company with Sir Walter, who to the last always lodged there when any business took him to Jedburgh.

believe that the kind and manly character of Dandie, the gentle and delicious one of his wife, and some at least of the most picturesque peculiarities of the *menage* at Charlieshope, were filled up from Scott's observation, years after this period, of a family, with one of whose members he had, through the best part of his life, a close and affectionate connexion. To those who were familiar with him, I have perhaps already sufficiently indicated the early home of his dear friend, William Laidlaw, among 'the braes of Yarrow.'

They dined at Millburnholm, and after having lingered over Willie Elliot's punch-bowl, until, in Mr. Shortreed's phrase, they were 'half-glowrin,' mounted their steed again, and proceeded to Dr. Elliot's at Cleughhead, where ('for,' says my Memorandum, 'folk were na very nice in those days') the two travellers slept in one and the same bed—as, indeed, seems to have been the case with them throughout most of their excursions in this primitive district. Dr. Elliot (a clergyman) had already a large MS. collection of the ballads Scott was in quest of; and finding how much his guest admired his acquisitions, thenceforth exerted himself, for several years, with redoubled diligence, in seeking out the living depositaries of such lore among the darker recesses of the mountains. 'The doctor,' says Mr. Shortreed, 'would have gane through the fire and water for Sir Walter, when he ance kenned him.'

Next morning they seem to have ridden a long way, for the express purpose of visiting one 'auld Thomas o' Tuzzilehope,' another Elliot, I suppose, who was celebrated for his skill on the Border pipe, and in particular for being in possession of the real *lilt* of *Dick o' the Cow.* Before starting, that is at six o'clock, the ballad-hunter had, 'just to lay the stomach, a devilled duck or twae, and some *London* porter.' Auld Thomas found them, nevertheless, well disposed for 'breakfast' on their arrival at Tuzzilehope; and this being over, he delighted them with one of the most hideous and unearthly of all specimens of 'riding music,' and, moreover, with considerable libations of whisky-punch, manufactured in a certain wooden vessel, resembling a very small milk-pail, which he called 'Wisdom,' because it 'made' only a few spoonfuls of spirits—though he had the art of replenishing it so adroitly, that it had been celebrated for fifty years as more fatal to sobriety than any bowl in the parish. Having done due honour to 'Wisdom,' they again mounted, and proceeded over moss and moor to some other equally hospitable master of the pipe. 'Ah me,' says Shortreed, 'sic an endless fund o' humour and drollery as he then had wi' him! Never ten yards but we were either laughing or roaring and singing. Wherever we stopped, how brawlie he suited himsell to every body! He aye did as the lave did; never made himsell the great man, or took ony airs in the company. I've seen him in a' moods in these jaunts, grave and gay, daft and serious, sober and drunk—(this, however, even in our wildest rambles, was but rare)—but drunk or sober, he was aye the gentleman. He lookit excessively heavy and stupid when he was *fou,* but he was never out o' gude-humour.'

On reaching, one evening, some *Charlieshope* or other (I forget the name) among those wildernesses, they found a kindly reception as usual; but, to their agreeable surprise after some days of hard living, a measured and orderly hospitality as respected liquor. Soon after supper, at which a bottle of elderberry wine alone had been produced, a young student of divinity, who happened to be in the house, was called upon to take the 'big ha' Bible,' in the good old fashion of Burns's Saturday Night; and some progress had been already made in the service, when the goodman of the farm, whose 'tendency,' as Mr. Mitchell says, 'was soporific,' scandalized his wife and the dominie by starting suddenly from his knees, and rubbing his eyes, with a stentorian exclamation of 'By——, here's the keg at last!' and in tumbled, as he spake the word, a couple of sturdy herdsmen, whom, on hearing a day before of the advocate's approaching visit, he had despatched to a certain smuggler's haunt, at some considerable distance, in quest of a supply of *run* brandy from the Solway Frith. The pious 'exercise' of the household was hopelessly interrupted. With a thousand apologies for his hitherto shabby entertainment, this jolly Elliot, or Armstrong, had the welcome *keg* mounted on the table without a moment's delay, and gentle and simple, not forgetting the dominie, continued carousing about it until daylight streamed in upon the party. Sir Walter Scott seldom failed, when I saw him in company with his Liddesdale companion, to mimic with infinite humour the sudden outburst of his old host, on hearing the clatter of horses' feet, which he knew to indicate the arrival of the keg—the consternation of the dame—and the rueful despair with which the young clergyman closed the book.

'It was that same season, I think,' says Mr. Shortreed, 'that Sir Walter got from Dr. Elliot, the large old border war horn, which ye may still see hanging in the armoury at Abbotsford. How *great* he was when he was made master o' *that!* I believe it had been found in Hermitage Castle—and one of the doctor's servants had used it many a day as a grease-horn for his scythe, before they discovered its history. When cleaned out, it was never a hair the worse—the original chain, hoop, and mouthpiece of steel were all entire, just as you now see them. Sir Walter carried it home all the way from Liddesdale to Jedburgh, slung about his neck like Johnny Gilpin's bottle, while I was intrusted with an ancient bridlebit, which we had likewise picked up.

> "The feint o' pride—na pride had he . . .
> A lang kail-gully hung down by his side,
> And a great meikle nowt-horn to rout on had he,"

And meikle and sair we routed on't, and "hotched and blew, wi' micht and main." O what pleasant days! and then a' the nonsense we had cost us naething. We never put hand in pocket for a week on end. Tollbars there were none—and indeed I think our haill charges were a feed o' corn to our horses in the gangin' and comin' at Riccartoun mill.'

It is a pity that we have no letters of Scott's, describing this first *raid* into Liddesdale; but as he must have left Kelso for Edinburgh very soon after its conclusion, he probably chose to be the bearer of his own tidings. At any rate the wonder perhaps is not that we should have so few letters of this period, as that any have been recovered. 'I ascribe the preservation of my little handful,' says Mr. Clerk, 'to a sort of instinctive prophetic sense of his future greatness.'

I have found, however, two note-books, inscribed 'Walter Scott, 1792,' containing a variety of scraps and hints which may help us to fill up our notion of his private studies during that year. He appears to have used them indiscriminately. We have now an extract from the author he happened to be reading; now a memorandum of something that had struck him in conversation; a fragment of an essay; transcripts of favourite poems; remarks on curious cases in the old records of the Justiciary Court; in short, a most miscellaneous collection, in which there is whatever might have been looked for, with perhaps the single exception of original verse. One of the books opens, with 'Vegtam's Kvitha, or The Descent of Odin, with the Latin of Thomas Bartholine, and the English poetical version of Mr. Gray; with some account of the death of Balder, both as narrated in the Edda, and as handed down to us by the Northern historians—*Auctore Gualtero Scott.*' The Norse original, and the two versions, are then transcribed; and the historical account appended, extending to seven closely-written quarto pages, was, I doubt not, read before one or other of his debating societies. Next comes a page, headed 'Pecuniary distress of Charles the First,' and containing a transcript of a receipt for some plate lent to the King in 1643. He then copies the 'Owen of Carron,' of Langhorne; the verses of Canute, on passing Ely; the lines to a cuckoo given by Wharton as the oldest specimen of English verse; a translation 'by a gentleman in Devonshire,' of the death-song of 'Regner Lodbrog;' and the beautiful quatrain omitted in Gray's elegy,—

"There scattered oft, the earliest of the year," &c.

After this we have an Italian canzonet, on the praises of blue eyes, (which were much in favour at this time); several pages of etymologies from Ducange; some more of notes on the Morte Arthur; extracts from the books of Adjournal, about Dame Janet Beaton, the Lady of Branxome of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, and her husband, 'Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch, called *Wicked Watt;*' other extracts about witches and fairies; various couplets from Hall's Satires; a passage from *Albania;* notes on the Second Sight, with extracts from Aubry and Glanville; a 'List of ballads to be discovered or recovered;' extracts from *Guerin de Montglave;* and after many more similar entries, a table of the Mæso-Gothic, Anglo-Saxon and Runic alphabets —with a fourth section headed *German,* but left blank. But enough perhaps of this record.

In November 1792, Scott and Clerk began their regular attendance at the Parliament House, and Scott, to use Mr. Clerk's words, "by and by crept into a tolerable share of such business as may be expected from a writer's connexion." By this we are to understand that he was employed from time to time by his father, and probably a few other solicitors, in that dreary every-day task-work, chiefly of long written *informations,* and other papers from the court, on which young counsellors of the Scotch bar were then expected to bestow a great deal of trouble for very scanty pecuniary remuneration, and with scarcely a chance of finding reserved for their hands any matter that could elicit the display of superior knowledge or understanding. He had also his part in the cases of persons suing *in forma pauperis;* but how little important those that came to his share were, and how slender was the impression they had left on his mind, we may gather from a note on Redgauntlet, wherein he signifies his doubts whether he really had ever been engaged in what he has certainly made the *cause célèbre* of *Poor Peter Peebles.*

But he soon became as famous for his powers of story-telling among the lawyers of the Outer-House, as he had been among the companions of his High School days. The place where these idlers mostly congregated was called, it seems, by a name which sufficiently marks the date—it was *the Mountain.* Here, as Roger North says of the Court of King's Bench in his early day, "there was more News than Law;"—here hour after hour passed away, week after week, month after month, and year after year, in the interchange of light-hearted merriment, among a circle of young men, more than one of whom, in after times, attained the highest honours of the profession. Among the most intimate of Scott's daily associates from this time, and during all his subsequent attendance at the bar, were, besides various since eminent persons that have been already named, the first legal antiquary of our time in Scotland, Mr. Thomas Thomson, and William Erskine, afterwards Lord Kinedder. Mr. Clerk remembers complaining one morning on finding the group convulsed with laughter, that *Duns Scotus* had been forestalling him in a good story, which he had communicated privately the day before—adding, moreover, that his friend had not only stolen, but disguised it. 'Why,' answered he, skilfully waiving the main charge, 'this is always the way with *the Baronet.* He is continually saying that I change his stories, whereas in fact I only put a cocked hat on their heads, and stick a cane into their hands—to make them fit for going into company.'

The German class, of which we have an account in one of the Prefaces of 1830, was formed before the Christmas of 1792, and it included almost all these loungers of *the Mountain.* In the essay now referred to, Scott traces the interest excited in Scotland on the subject of German literature to a paper read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, on the 21st of April, 1788, by the author of the Man of Feeling. 'The literary persons of Edinburgh,' he says, 'were then first made aware of the existence of works of genius in a language cognate with the English, and possessed of the same manly force of expression; they learned at the same time that the taste which dictated the German compositions was of a kind as nearly allied to the English as their language: those who were from their youth accustomed to admire Shakspeare and Milton, became acquainted for the first time with a race of poets, who had the same lofty ambition to spurn the flaming boundaries of the universe, and investigate the realms of Chaos and old Night; and of dramatists, who, disclaiming the pedantry of the unities, sought, at the expense of occasional improbabilities and extravagance, to present life on the stage in its scenes of st contrast, and in all its boundless variety of character. . . . Their s narratives, their ballad poetry, and other branches of their literature, which are particularly apt to bear the stamp of the extravagant and the supernatural, began also to occupy the attention of the British literati. In Edinburgh, where the remarkable coincidence between the German language and the Lowland Scottish, encouraged young men to approach this newly discovered spring of literature, a class was formed of six or seven intimate friends, who proposed to make themselves acquainted with the German language. They were in the habit of being much together, and the time they spent in this new study was felt as a period of great amusement. One source of this diversion was the laziness of one of their number, the present author, who, averse to the necessary toil of grammar, and the rules, was in the practice of fighting his way to the knowledge of the German by his acquaintance with the Scottish and Anglo-Saxon dialects, and of course frequently committed blunders which were not lost on his more accurate and more studious companions.' The teacher, Dr. Willich, a medical man, is then described as striving with little success to make his pupils sympathize in his own passion for the 'sickly monotony,' and 'affected ecstasies' of Gessner's Death of Abel; and the young students, having at length acquired enough of the language for their respective purposes, as selecting for their private pursuits, some the philosophical treatises of Kant, others the dramas of Schiller and Goethe. The chief, if not the only *Kantist* of the party, was, I believe, John Macfarlan of Kirkton: among those who turned zealously to the popular *Belles Lettres* of Germany were, with Scott, his most intimate friends of the period, William Clerk, William Erskine, and Thomas Thomson.

These studies were much encouraged by the example, and assisted by the advice of an accomplished person, considerably Scott's superior in standing, Alexander Frazer Tytler, afterwards a Judge of the Court of Session by the title of Lord Woodhouselee. His version of Schiller's Robbers, was one of the earliest from the German theatre, and no doubt stimulated his young friend to his first experiments in the same walk.

The contemporary familiars of those days almost all survive; but one, and afterwards the most intimate of them all, went before him; and I may therefore hazard in this place a few words on the influence which he exercised at this critical period on Scott's literary tastes and studies. William Erskine was the son of an Episcopalian clergyman in Perthshire, of a good family, but far from wealthy. He had received his early education at Glasgow, where, while attending the College lectures, he was boarded under the roof of Andrew Macdonald, the author of Vimonda, who then officiated as minister to a small congregation of Episcopalian nonconformists. From this unfortunate but very ingenious man, Erskine had derived, in boyhood, a strong passion for old English literature, more especially the Elizabethan dramatists; which, however, he combined with a far livelier relish for the classics of antiquity than either Scott or his master ever possessed. From the beginning, accordingly, Scott had in Erskine a monitor who—entering most warmly into his taste for national lore—the life of the past—and the bold and picturesque style of the original English school—was constantly urging the advantages to be derived from combining with its varied and masculine breadth of delineation such attention to the minor graces of arrangement and diction as might conciliate the fastidiousness of modern taste. Deferring what I may have to say as to Erskine's general character and manners, until I shall have approached the period when I myself had the pleasure of sharing his acquaintance, I introduce the general bearing of his literary opinions thus early, because I conceive there is no doubt that his companionship was, even in those days, highly serviceable to Scott as a student of the German drama and romance. Directed, as he mainly was in the ultimate determination of his literary ambition, by the example of their great founders, he appears to have run at first no trivial hazard of adopting the extravagances, both of thought and language, which he found blended in their works with such a captivating display of genius, and genius employed on subjects so much in unison with the deepest of his own juvenile predilections. His friendly critic was just, as well as delicate; and unmerciful severity as to the mingled absurdities and vulgarities of German detail commanded deliberate attention from one, who admired not less unthusiastically than himself the genuine sublimity and pathos of his new favourites. I could, I believe, name one other at least among Scott's fellow-students of the same time, whose influence was combined in this matter with Erskine's; but his was that which continued to be exerted the longest, and always in the same direction. That it was not accompanied with entire success, the readers of the Doom of Devergoil, to say nothing of minor blemishes in far better works, must acknowledge.

These German studies divided Scott's attention with the business of the courts of law, on which he was at least a regular attendant, during the winter of 1792–3.

If the preceding autumn forms a remarkable point in Scott's history, as first introducing him to the manners of the wilder Border country, the summer which followed left traces of equal importance. He gave the greater part of it to an excursion which much extended his knowledge of Highland scenery and character; and in particular furnished him with the richest stores which he afterwards turned to account in one of the most beautiful of his great poems, and in several, including the first, of his prose romances.

Accompanied by Adam Fergusson, he visited on this occasion some of the finest districts of Stirlingshire and Perthshire; and not in the percursory manner of his more boyish expeditions, but taking up his residence for a week or ten days in succession at the family residence of several of his young allies of *the Mountain*, and from thence familiarizing himself at leisure with the country and the people round about. In this way he lingered some time at Tullibody, the seat of the father of Sir Ralph Abercromby, and grandfather of his friend Mr. George Abercromby (now Lord Abercromby); and heard from the old gentleman's own lips his narrative of a journey which he had been obliged to make, shortly after he first settled in Stirlingshire, to the wild retreat of Rob Roy. The venerable laird told how he was received by the cateran 'with much courtesy,' in a cavern exactly such as that of *Bean Lean;* dined on collops cut from some of his own cattle, which he recognised hanging by their heels from the rocky roof beyond; and returned in all safety, after concluding a bargain of *black-mail*—in virtue of which annual payment Rob Roy guarantied the future security of his herds against, not his own followers merely, but all freebooters whatever. Scott next visited his friend Edmonstone, at Newton, a beautiful seat close to the ruins of the once magnificent Castle of Doune, and heard another aged gentleman's vivid recollections of all that happened there when John Home, the author of Douglas, and other Hanoverian prisoners, escaped from the Highland garrison in 1745.* Proceeding towards the sources of the Teith, he was received for the first time under the roof which, in subsequent years, he regularly revisited, that of another of his associates, Buchanan, the young laird of Cambusmore. It was thus that the scenery of Loch Katrine came to be so associated with 'the recollection of many a dear friend and merry expedition of former days,' that to compose the Lady of the Lake was 'a labour of love, and no less so to recall the manners and incidents introduced.'† It was starting from the same house, when the poem itself had made some progress, that he put to the test the practicability of riding from the banks of Lochvennachar to the Castle of Stirling within the brief space which he had assigned to Fitz-James's Grey Bayard, after the duel with Roderick Dhu; and the principal landmarks in the description of that fiery progress are so many hospitable mansions all familiar to him at the same period—Blairdrummond, the residence of Lord Kaimes; Ochtertyre, that of John Ramsay, the scholar and antiquarian (now best remembered for his kind and sagacious advice to Burns); and 'the lofty brow of ancient Kier,' the splendid seat of the chief family of the name of Stirling; from which, to say nothing of remoter objects, the prospect has, on one hand, the rock of 'Snowdon,' and in front the field of Bannockburn.

Another resting-place was Craighall, in Perthshire, the seat of the Rattrays, a family related to Mr. Clerk, who accompanied him. From the position of this striking place, as Mr. Clerk at once perceived, and as the author afterwards confessed to him, that of the *Tully-Veolan* was very faithfully copied; though in the description of the house itself, and its gardens, many features were adopted from Bruntsfield and Ravelstone.‡ Mr. Clerk has told me that he went through the first chapters of Waverley without more than a vague suspicion of the new novelist; but when he read the arrival at Tully-Veolan, his suspicion was at once converted into certainty, and he handed the book to a mutual friend of his and the author's, saying, 'This is Scott's—and I'll lay a bet you'll find such and such things in the next chapter.' I hope Mr. Clerk will forgive me for mentioning *the* particular circumstance that first flashed the conviction on his mind. In the course of a ride from Craighall they had both become considerably fagged and heated, and Clerk, seeing the smoke of a *clachan* a little way before them, ejaculated, 'How agreeable if we should here fall in with one of those sign-posts where a red lion predominates over a punchbowl.' The phrase happened to tickle Scott's fancy—he often introduced it on similar occasions afterwards—and at the distance of twenty years Mr. Clerk was at no loss to recognise an old acquaintance in the 'huge bear' which 'predominates' over the stone basin in the court-yard of the Baron of Bradwardine.

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* Waverley, vol. ii. p. 82.

† Introduction to The Lady of the Lake. 1830.

‡ Waverley, vol. i. p. 82.

I believe the longest stay he made this autumn was at Meigle in Forfarshire, the seat of Patrick Murray of Simprim, a gentleman whose enthusiastic passion for antiquities, and especially military antiquities, had peculiarly endeared him both to Scott and Clerk. Here Adam Fergusson too was of the party; and I have often heard them each and all dwell on the thousand scenes of adventure and merriment which diversified that visit. In the village churchyard, close beneath Mr. Murray's gardens, tradition still points out the tomb of Queen Guenever; and the whole district abounds in objects of historical interest. Amidst them they spent their wandering days, while their evenings passed in the joyous festivity of a wealthy young bachelor's establishment, or sometimes under the roofs of neighbours less refined than their host, the *Balmawhapples* of the Braes of Angus. From Meigle they made a trip to Dunottar Castle, the ruins of the huge old fortress of the Earls Marischall, and it was in the churchyard of that place that Scott then saw for the first and last time Peter Paterson, the living *Old Mortality*. He and Mr. Walker, the minister of the parish, found the poor man refreshing the epitaphs on the tombs of certain Cameronians who had fallen under the oppressions of James the Second's brief insanity. Being invited into the manse after dinner to take a glass of whisky punch, 'to which he was supposed to have no objections,' he joined the minister's party accordingly, but 'he was in bad humour,' says Scott, 'and, to use his own phrase, had no freedom for conversation. His spirit had been sorely vexed by hearing, in a certain Aberdonian kirk, the psalmody directed by a pitch-pipe or some similar instrument, which was to Old Mortality the abomination of abominations.'

It was also while he had his head-quarters at Meigle at this time that Scott visited for the first time *Glammis*, the residence of the Earls of Strathmore, by far the noblest specimen of the real feudal castle, entire and perfect that had as yet come under his inspection. What its aspect was when he first saw it, and how grievously he lamented the change it had undergone when he revisited it some years afterwards, he has recorded in one of the most striking passages that I think ever came from his pen. Commenting, in his Essay on Landscape Gardening (1828), on the proper domestic ornaments of the Castle *Pleasaunce*, he has this beautiful burst of lamentation over the barbarous innovations of *the Capability men*:—'Down went many a trophy of old magnificence, courtyard, ornamented enclosure, fosse, avenue, barbican, and every external muniment of battled wall and flanking tower, out of the midst of which the ancient dome rising high above all its characteristic accompaniments, and seemingly girt round by its appropriate defences, which again circled each other in their different gradations, looked, as it should, the queen and mistress of the surrounding country. It was thus that the huge old tower of Glammis, "whose birth tradition notes not," once showed its lordly head above seven circles (if I remember aright) of defensive boundaries, through which the friendly guest was admitted, and at each of which a suspicious person was unquestionably put to his answer. A disciple of Kent had the cruelty to render this splendid old mansion (the more modern part of which was the work of Inigo Jones) more *parkish*, as he was pleased to call it; to raze all those exterior defences, and bring his mean and paltry gravel-walk up to the very door from which, deluded by the name, one might have imagined Lady Macbeth (with the form and features of Siddons) issuing forth to receive King Duncan. It is thirty years and upwards since I have seen Glammis, but I have not yet forgotten or forgiven the atrocity which, under pretence of improvement, deprived that lordly place of its appropriate accompaniments,

> "Leaving an ancient dome and towers like these
> Beggar'd and outraged." ' [*]

The night he spent at the yet unprofaned Glammis in 1793 was, as he elsewhere says, one of the '*two* periods distant from each other' at which he could recollect experiencing 'that degree of superstitious awe which his countrymen call *eerie*.' 'The heavy pile,' he writes, 'contains much in its appearance, and in the traditions connected with it, impressive to the imagination. It was the scene of the murder of a Scottish King of great antiquity, not indeed the gracious Duncan, with whom the name naturally associates itself, but Malcolm II. It contains also a curious monument of the peril of feudal times, being a secret chamber, the entrance of which, by the law or custom of the family, must only be known to three persons at once, namely, the Earl of Strathmore, his heir-apparent, and any third person whom they may take into their confidence. The extreme antiquity of the building is vouched by the thickness of the walls, and the wild straggling arrangement of the accommodation within doors. As the late earl seldom resided at Glammis, it was when I was there but half furnished, and that with movables of great antiquity, which, with the pieces of chivalric armour hanging on the walls, greatly contributed to the general effect of the whole. After a very hospitable reception from the late Peter Proctor, seneschal of the castle, I was conducted to my apartment in a distant part of the building. I must own that when I heard door after door shut, after my conductor had retired, I began to consider myself as too far from the living, and somewhat too near the dead. We had passed through what is called *the King's Room*, a vaulted apartment, garnished with stag's antlers and other trophies of the chase, and said by tradition to be the spot of Malcolm's murder, and I had an idea of the vicinity of the castle chapel. In spite of the truth of history, the whole night scene in Macbeth's Castle rushed at once upon me, and struck my mind more forcibly than even when I have seen its terrors represented by John Kemble and his inimitable sister. In a word, I experienced sensations which, though not remarkable for timidity or superstition, did not fail to affect me to the point of being disagreeable, while they were mingled at the same time with a strange and indescribable sort of pleasure, the recollection of which affords me gratification at this moment.'[†]

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[*] Wordsworth's Sonnet on Neidpath Castle.

[†] Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, p. 398.

He alludes here to the hospitable reception which had preceded the mingled sensations of this *eerie* night; but one of his notes on Waverley touches this not unimportant part of the story more distinctly; for we are there informed, that the *silver bear* of Tully-Veolan, 'the *poculum potatorium* of the valiant baron,' had its prototype at Glammis—a massive beaker of silver, double gilt, moulded into the form of a *lion*, the name and bearing of the Earls of Strathmore, and containing about an English pint of wine. 'The author,' he says, 'ought perhaps to be ashamed of recording that he had the honour of swallowing the contents of *the lion*, and the recollection of the feat suggested the story of the Bear of Bradwardine.'

From this pleasant tour, so rich in its results, Scott returned in time to attend the October assizes at Jedburgh, on which occasion he made his first appearance as counsel in a criminal court; and had the satisfaction of helping a veteran poacher and sheepstealer to escape through some of the meshes of the law. 'You're a lucky scoundrel,' Scott whispered to his client, when the verdict was pronounced. 'I'm just o' your mind,' quoth the desperado, 'and I'll send ye a maukin* the morn, man.' I am not sure whether it was at these assizes or the next in the same town that he had less success in the case of a certain notorious housebreaker. The man, however, was well aware that no skill could have baffled the clear evidence against him, and was, after his fashion, grateful for such exertions as had been made in his behalf. He requested the young advocate to visit him once more before he left the place. Scott's curiosity induced him to accept this invitation, and his friend, as soon as they were alone together in the *condemned cell*, said, 'I am very sorry, sir, that I have no fee to offer you—so let me beg your acceptance of two bits of advice which may be useful perhaps when you come to have a house of your own. I am done with practice, you see, and here is my legacy. Never keep a large watchdog out of doors—we can always silence them cheaply—indeed if it be a *dog*, 'tis easier than whistling—but tie a little tight yelping terrier within; and secondly, put no trust in nice, clever, gimcrack locks—the only thing that bothers us is a huge old heavy one, no matter how simple the construction,—and the ruder and rustier the key, so much the better for the housekeeper.' I remember hearing him tell this story some thirty years after at a Judges' dinner at Jedburgh, and he summed it up with a rhyme—'Ay, ay, my lord,' (I think he addressed his friend Lord Meadowbank)—

"Yelping tarrier, rusty key,
Was Walter Scott's best Jeddart fee."

At these, or perhaps the next assizes, he was also counsel in an appeal case touching a cow which his client had sold as sound, but which the court below (the Sheriff) had pronounced to have what is called *the cliers*—a disease analogous to glanders in a horse. In opening his case before Sir David Rae, Lord Eskgrove, Scott stoutly maintained the healthiness of the cow, who, he said, had merely a cough. 'Stop there,' quoth the judge, 'I have had plenty of healthy kye in my time, but I never heard of ane of them coughing. A coughin' cow!—that will never do—sustain the Sheriff's judgment, and decern.'

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* i. e. a hare.

A day or two after this, Scott and his old companion were again on their way into Liddesdale, and 'just,' says the Shortreed Memorandum, 'as we were passing by Singdon, we saw a grand herd o' cattle a' feeding by the roadside, and a fine young bullock, the best in the whole lot, was in the midst of them, coughing lustily. "Ah," said Scott, "what a pity for my client that old Eskgrove had not taken Singdon on his way to the town. That bonny creature would have saved us—

> 'A Daniel come to judgment, yea a Daniel;
> O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!'"

The winter of 1793–4 appears to have been passed like the preceding one; the German class resumed their sittings; Scott spoke in his debating club on the questions of Parliamentary Reform and the Inviolability of the Person of the First Magistrate, which the circumstances of the time had invested with extraordinary interest, and in both of which he no doubt took the side adverse to the principles of the English, and the practice of the French Liberals. His love affair continued on exactly the same footing as before—and for the rest, like the young heroes in Redgauntlet, he 'swept the boards of the Parliament House with the skirts of his gown; laughed, and made others laugh; drank claret at Bayle's, Fortune's, and Walker's, and eat oysters in the Covenant Close.' On his desk 'the new novel most in repute lay snugly intrenched beneath Stair's Institute, or an open volume of Decisions;' and his dressing-table was littered 'with old play-bills, letters respecting a meeting of the Faculty, Rules of the Speculative, Syllabus of Lectures—all the miscellaneous contents of a young advocate's pocket, which contains every thing but briefs and bank-notes.' His own professional occupation, though gradually increasing, was still of the most humble sort; but he took a lively interest in the proceedings of the criminal court, and more especially in those arising out of the troubled state of the public feeling as to politics.

In the spring of 1794 I find him writing to his friends in Roxburghshire with great exultation about the 'good spirit' manifesting itself among the upper classes of the citizens of Edinburgh, and above all, the organization of a regiment of volunteers, in which his brother Thomas, now a fine active young man, equally handsome and high-spirited, was enrolled as a grenadier; while, as he remarks, his own 'unfortunate infirmity' condemned him to be 'a mere spectator of the drills.' In the course of the same year the plan of a corps of volunteer light horse was started; and, if the recollection of Mr. Skene be accurate, the suggestion originally proceeded from Scott himself, who certainly had a principal share in its subsequent success. He writes to his uncle at Rosebank, requesting him to be on the look-out for a 'strong gelding, such as would suit a stalwart dragoon;' and intimating his intention to part with his collection of Scottish coins, rather than not be mounted to his mind. The corps, however, was not organized for some time; and in the mean while he had an opportunity of displaying his zeal in a manner which Captain Scott by no means considered as so respectable.

A party of Irish medical students began, towards the end of April, to make themselves remarkable in the Edinburgh Theatre, where they mustered in a particular corner of the pit, and lost no opportunity of insulting the loyalists of the boxes, by calling for revolutionary tunes, applauding every speech that could bear a seditious meaning, and drowning the national anthem in howls and hootings. The young Tories of the Parliament House resented this license warmly, and after a succession of minor disturbances, the quarrel was put to the issue of a regular trial by combat. Scott was conspicuous among the juvenile advocates and solicitors who on this grand night assembled in the front of the pit armed with stout cudgels, and determined to have *God save the King* not only played without interruption, but sung in full chorus by both company and audience. The Irishmen were ready at the first note of the anthem. They rose, clapped on their hats, and brandished their shilelahs; a stern battle ensued, and after many a head had been cracked, the loyalists at length found themselves in possession of the field. Next morning the more prominent rioters on both sides were bound over to keep the peace, and Scott was, of course, among the number. One of the party, Sir Alexander Wood, whose notes lie before me, says,—'Walter was certainly our Coriphæus, and signalized himself splendidly in this desperate fray; and nothing used afterwards to afford him more delight than dramatizing its incidents. Some of the most efficient of our allies were persons previously unknown to him, and of some of those whom he had particularly observed, he never lost sight afterwards. There were, I believe, cases in which they owed most valuable assistance in life to his recollection of *the playhouse row.*' To this last part of Sir Alexander's testimony I can also add mine; and I am sure my worthy friend, Mr. Donald M'Lean, W. S., will gratefully confirm it. When that gentleman became candidate for some office in the Exchequer, about 1822 or 1823, and Sir Walter's interest was requested on his behalf,—"To be sure!" said he, "did not he sound the charge upon Paddy? Can I ever forget Donald's 'Sticks, by G—t?'" On the 9th May, 1794, Charles Kerr of Abbotrule writes to him,—"I was last night at Rosebank, and your uncle told me he had been giving you a very long and very sage lecture upon the occasion of these Edinburgh squabbles. I am happy to hear they are now at an end. They were rather of the serious cast, and though you encountered them with spirit and commendable resolution, I, with your uncle, should wish to see your abilities conspicuous on another theatre." The same gentleman, in his next letter (June 3d), congratulates Scott on having "seen *his name in the newspaper*," viz. as counsel for another Roxburghshire laird, by designation *Bedrule*. Such, no doubt, was Abbotrule's "other theatre."

Scott spent the long vacation of this year chiefly in Roxburghshire, but again visited Keir, Cambusmore, and others of his friends in Perthshire, and came to Edinburgh, early in September, to be present at the trials of Watt and Downie, on a charge of high treason. Watt seems to have tendered his services to Government as a spy upon the Society of the Friends of the People in Edinburgh, but ultimately, considering himself as underpaid, to have embraced, to their wildest extent, the schemes he had become acquainted with in the course of this worthy occupation: and he and one Downie, a mechanic, were now arraigned as having taken a prominent part in the organizing of a plot for a general rising in Edinburgh, to seize the castle, the bank, the persons of the Judges, and proclaim a provisional Republican Government; all which was supposed to have been arranged in concert with the Hardies, Thelwalls, Holcrofts, and so forth, who were a few weeks later brought to trial in London, for an alleged conspiracy to 'summon delegates to a National Convention, with a view to subvert the Government, and levy war upon the King.' The English prisoners were acquitted, but Watt and Downie were not so fortunate. Scott writes as follows to his aunt, Miss Christian Rutherford, then at Ashestiel, in Selkirkshire:—

"Advocates' Library, 5th Sept. 1794.

"My dear Miss Christy will perceive, from the date of this epistle, that I have accomplished my purpose of coming to town to be present at the trial of the Edinburgh traitors. I arrived here on Monday evening from Kelso, and was present at Watt's trial on Wednesday, which displayed to the public the most atrocious and deliberate plan of villany which has occurred, perhaps, in the annals of Great Britain. I refer you for particulars to the papers, and shall only add, that the equivocations and perjury of the witnesses (most of them being accomplices in what they called the *great plan*) set the abilities of Mr. Anstruther, the King's counsel, in the most striking point of view. The patience and temper with which he tried them on every side, and screwed out of them the evidence they were so anxious to conceal, showed much knowledge of human nature; and the art with which he arranged the information he received, made the trial, upon the whole, the most interesting I ever was present at. Downie's trial is just now going forwards over my head; but as the evidence is just the same as formerly brought against Watt, is not so interesting. You will easily believe that on Wednesday my curiosity was too much excited to retire at an early hour, and, indeed, I sat in the Court from seven in the morning till two the next morning; but as I had provided myself with some cold meat and a bottle of wine, I contrived to support the fatigue pretty well. It strikes me, upon the whole, that the plan of these miscreants might, from its very desperate and improbable nature, have had no small chance of succeeding, at least as far as concerned cutting off the soldiers, and obtaining possession of the banks, besides shedding the blood of the most distinguished inhabitants. There I think, the evil must have stopped, unless they had further support than has yet appeared. Stooks was the prime mover of the whole, and the person who supplied the money, and our theatrical disturbances are found to have formed one link of the chain. So, I have no doubt, Messrs. Stooks, Burk, &c., would have found out a new way of paying old debts. The *people* are perfectly quiescent upon this grand occasion, and seem to interest themselves very little in the fate of their *soi-disant friends*. The Edinburgh volunteers make a respectable and formidable appearance already. They are exercised four hours almost every day, with all the rigour of military discipline. The grenadier company consists entirely of men above six feet. So much for public news.

"As to home intelligence—know that my mother and Anne had projected a *jaunt* to Inverleithing; fate, however, had destined otherwise. The intended day of departure was ushered in by a most complete deluge, to which, and the consequent disappointment, our proposed travellers did not submit with that Christian meekness which might have beseemed. In short, both within and without doors, it was a *devil* of a day. The second was like unto it. The third day came a post, a killing post, and in the shape of a letter from this fountain of health, informed us no lodgings were to be had there; so, whatever be its virtues, or the grandeur attending a journey to its streams, we might as well have proposed to visit the river Jordan, or the walls of Jericho. Not so our heroic John; he has been arrived here for some time (much the same as when he went away), and has formed the desperate resolution of riding out with me to Kelso to-morrow morning. I have stayed a day longer, waiting for the arrival of a pair of new boots and buckskin &cs., in which the soldier is to be equipt. I ventured to hint the convenience of a roll of diaculum plaister, and a box of the most approved horseman-salve, in which recommendation our doctor* warmly joined. His impatience for the journey has been somewhat cooled by some inclination yesterday displayed by his charger (a pony belonging to Anne) to lay his warlike rider in the dust—a purpose he had nearly effected. He next mounted Queen Mab, who treated him with little more complaisance, and, in carters' phrase, would neither *hap* nor *wynd*, till she got rid of him. Seriously, however, if Jack has not returned covered with laurels, a crop which the Rock† no longer produces, he has brought back all his own good-nature, and a manner considerably improved, so that he is at times very agreeable company. Best love to Miss R., Jean, and Anne (I hope they are improved at the battledore), and the boys, not forgetting my friend Archy, though least not last in my remembrance. Best compliments to the Colonel.‡ I shall remember with pleasure Ashestiel hospitality, and not without a desire to put it to the proof next year. Adieu, ma chère amie. When you write, direct to Rosebank, and I shall be a good boy, and write you another sheet of nonsense soon. All friends here well. Ever yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT.

The letter, of which the following is an extract, must have been written in October or November—Scott, having been in Liddesdale, and again in Perthshire, during the interval. It is worth quoting for the little domestic allusions with which it concludes, and which every one who has witnessed the discipline of a Presbyterian family of the old school at the time of preparation for *the Communion*, will perfectly understand. Scott's father, though on particular occasions he could permit himself, like Saunders Fairford, to play the part of a good Amphytrion, was habitually ascetic in his habits. I have heard his son tell, that it was common with him, if any one observed that the soup was good, to taste it again, and say, "Yes, it is too good, bairns," and dash a tumbler of cold water into his plate. It is easy, therefore, to imagine with what rigidity he must have enforced the ultra-Catholic severities which marked, in those days, the yearly or half-yearly *retreat* of the descendants of John Knox.

To Miss Christian Rutherford.—Ashestiel.

"Previous to my ramble, I stayed a single day in town to witness the exit of the *ci-devant* Jacobin, Mr. Watt. It was a very solemn scene, but the pusillanimity of the unfortunate victim was astonishing, considering the boldness of his nefarious plans. It is matter of general regret that his associate Downie should have received a reprieve, which, I understand, is now prolonged for a second month, I suppose to wait the issue of the London trials. Our volunteers are now completely embodied, and notwithstanding the heaviness of their dress, have a martial and striking appearance. Their accuracy in firing and manœuvring excites the surprise of military gentlemen, who are the best judges of their merit in that way. Tom is very proud of the grenadier company, to which he belongs, which has indisputably carried off the palm upon all public occasions. And now, give me leave to ask you whether the approaching *winter* does not remind you of your snug parlour in George's Street? Do you not feel a little uncomfortable when you see

'how bleak and bare
He wanders o'er the heights of *Yair*?'

Amidst all this regard for your accommodation, don't suppose I am devoid of a little self-interest when I press your speedy return to Auld Reekie, for I am really tiring excessively to see the said parlour again inhabited. Besides that, I want the assistance of your eloquence to convince my honoured father that nature did not mean me either for a vagabond or *travelling merchant*, when she honoured me with the wandering propensity lately so conspicuously displayed. I saw Dr. yesterday, who is well. I did not choose to intrude upon the little lady, this being sermon week; for the same reason we are looking very religious and very sour at home. However, it is with *some folks*, selon les règles, that in proportion as they are pure themselves, they are entitled to render uncomfortable those whom they consider as less perfect. Best love to Miss R., cousins and friends in general, and believe me ever most sincerely yours,

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* Dr. Rutherford.

† Captain John Scott had been for some time with his regiment at Gibraltar.

‡ Colonel Russell of Ashestiel, married to a sister of Scott's mother.

WALTER SCOTT."

In March, 1795, when the court rose, he proceeded into Galloway, where he had not before been, in order to make himself acquainted with the persons and localities mixed up with the case of a certain Rev. Mr. M'Naught, minister of Girthon, whose trial, on charges of habitual drunkenness, singing of lewd and profane songs, dancing and toying at a penny-wedding with a "sweetie wife" (that is, an itinerant vender of gingerbread, &c.), and moreover of promoting irregular marriages as a justice of the peace, was about to take place before the General Assembly of the Kirk.

As his "Case for M'Naught," dated May 22, 1795, is the first of his legal papers that I have discovered, and contains several characteristic enough turns, I make no apology for introducing a few extracts:—

"At the head of the first class of offences stands the extraordinary assertion, that, being a minister of the gospel, the respondent had illegally undertaken the office of a justice of peace. It is, the respondent believes, the first time that ever the undertaking an office of such extensive utility was stated as a crime; for he humbly apprehends, that by conferring the office of a justice of the peace upon clergymen, their influence may, in the general case, be rendered more extensive among their parishioners, and many trifling causes be settled by them, which might lead the litigants to enormous expenses, and become the subject of much contention before other courts. The duty being only occasional, and not daily, cannot be said to interfere with those of their function; and their education, and presumed character, render them most proper for the office. It is indeed alleged, that the act 1584, chap. 133, excludes clergymen from acting under a commission of the peace. This act, however, was passed at a time when it was of the highest importance to the Crown to wrench from the hands of the clergy the power of administering justice in civil cases, which had, from the ignorance of the laity, been enjoyed by them almost exclusively. During the whole reign of James VI., as is well known to the Reverend Court, such a jealousy subsisted betwixt the Church and the State, that those who were at the head of the latter endeavoured, by every means in their power, to diminish the influence of the former. At present, when these dissensions happily no longer subsist, the law, as far as respects the office of justice of the peace, appears to have fallen into disuse; and the respondent conceives, that any minister is capable of acting in that, or any other judicial capacity, provided it is of such a nature as not to withdraw much of his time from what the statute calls the comfort and edification of the flock committed to him. Further, the act 1584 is virtually repealed by the statute 6th Anne, c. 6. sect. 2, which makes the Scots law on the subject of justices of the peace the same with that of England, where the office is publicly exercised by the clergy of all descriptions.

* * * * "Another branch of the accusation against the defender as a justice of peace, is the ratification of irregular marriages. The defender must here also call the attention of his reverend brethren and judges to the expediency of his conduct. The girls were usually with child at the time the application was made to the defender. In this situation the children born out of matrimony, though begot under promise of marriage, must have been thrown upon the parish, or perhaps murdered in infancy, had not the men been persuaded to consent to a solemn declaration of

betrothment, or private marriage, emitted before the defender as a justice of peace. The defender himself, commiserating the situation of such women, often endeavoured to persuade their seducers to do them justice; and men frequently acquiesced in this sort of marriage, when they could by no means have been prevailed upon to go through the ceremonies of proclamation of banns, or the expense and trouble of a public wedding. The declaration of a previous marriage was sometimes literally true; sometimes a fiction voluntarily emitted by the parties themselves, under the belief that it was the most safe way of constituting a private marriage *de presenti*. The defender had been induced, from the practice of other justices, to consider the receiving these declarations, whether true or false, as a part of his duty which he could not decline, even had he been willing to do so. Finally, the defender must remind the Venerable Assembly that he acted upon these occasions as a justice of peace, which brings him back to the point from which he set out, viz., that the Reverend Court are utterly incompetent to take cognizance of his conduct in that character, which no sentence that they can pronounce could give or take away.

"The second grand division of the libel against the defender refers to his conduct as a clergyman and a Christian. He was charged in the libel with the most gross and vulgar behaviour, with drunkenness, blasphemy, and impiety; yet all the evidence which the appellants have been able to bring forward tends only to convict him of three acts of drunkenness during the course of fourteen years; for even the Presbytery, severe as they have been, acquit him *quoad ultra*. But the attention of the Reverend Court is earnestly entreated to the situation of the defender at the time, the circumstances which conduced to his imprudence, and the share which some of those had in occasioning his guilt, who have since been most active in persecuting and distressing him on account of it.

"The defender must premise, by observing, that the crime of drunkenness consists not in a man's having been in that situation twice or thrice in his life, but in the constant and habitual practice of the vice; the distinction between *ebrius* and *ebriosus* being founded in common sense, and recognised by law. A thousand cases may be supposed, in which a man, without being aware of what he is about, may be insensibly led on to intoxication, especially in a country where the vice is unfortunately so common, that upon some occasions a man may go to excess from a false sense of modesty, or a fear of disobliging his entertainer. The defender will not deny, that after losing his senses upon the occasions, and in the manner to be afterwards stated, he may have committed improprieties which fill him with sorrow and regret; but he hopes, that in case he shall be able to show circumstances which abridge and palliate the guilt of his imprudent excess, the Venerable Court will consider these improprieties as the effects of that excess only, and not as arising from any radical vice in his temper or disposition. When a man is bereft of his judgment by the influence of wine, and commits any crime, he can only be said to be morally culpable, in proportion to the impropriety of the excess he has committed, and not in proportion to the magnitude of its evil consequences. In a legal view, indeed, a man must be held as answerable and punishable for such a crime, precisely as if he had been in a state of sobriety; but his crime is, in a moral light, comprised in the *origo mali*, the drunkenness only. His senses being once gone, he is no more than a human machine, as insensible of misconduct, in speech and action, as a parrot or an automaton. This is more particularly the case with respect to indecorums, such as the defender is accused of; for a man can no more be held a common swearer, or a habitual talker of obscenity. because he has been guilty of using such expressions when intoxicated, than he can be termed an idiot, because, when intoxicated, he has spoken nonsense. If, therefore, the defender can extenuate the guilt of his intoxication, he hopes that its consequences will be numbered rather among his misfortunes than faults; and his Reverend Brethren will consider him, while in that state, as acting from a mechanical impulse, and as incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong. For the scandal which his behaviour may have occasioned, he feels the most heartfelt sorrow, and will submit with penitence and contrition, to the severe rebuke which the Presbytery have decreed against him. But he cannot think that his unfortunate misdemeanour, circumstanced as he was, merits a severer punishment. He can show, that pains were at these times taken to lead him on, when bereft of his

> senses, to subjects which were likely to call forth improper or indecent expressions. The defender must further urge, that not being originally educated for the church, he may, before he assumed the sacred character, have occasionally permitted himself freedoms of expression which are reckoned less culpable among the laity. Thus, he may, during that time, have learned the songs which he is accused of singing, though rather inconsistent with his clerical character. What then was more natural than that, when thrown off his guard by the assumed conviviality and artful solicitations of those about him, former improper habits, though renounced during his thinking moments, might assume the reins of his imagination, when his situation rendered him utterly insensible of their impropriety!"
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> * * * * "The Venerable Court will now consider how far three instances of ebriety, and their consequences, should ruin at once the character and the peace of mind of the unfortunate defender, and reduce him, at his advanced time of life, about sixty years, together with his aged parent, to a state of beggary. He hopes his severe sufferings may be considered as some atonement for the improprieties of which he may have been guilty; and that the Venerable Court will, in their judgment, remember mercy.
>
> "In respect whereof, &c.
>
> WALTER SCOTT."

This argument (for which he received five guineas) was sustained by Scott in a speech of considerable length at the bar of the Assembly. It was far the most important business in which any solicitor had as yet employed him, and *The Club* mustered strong in the gallery. He began in a low voice, but by degrees gathered more confidence; and when it became necessary for him to analyse the evidence touching a certain penny-wedding, repeated some very coarse specimens of his client's alleged conversation in a tone so bold and free, that he was called to order with great austerity by one of the leading members of the Venerable Court. This seemed to confuse him not a little; so when, by and by, he had to recite a stanza of one of M'Naught's convivial ditties, he breathed it out in a faint and hesitating style; whereupon, thinking he needed encouragement, the allies in the gallery astounded the Assembly by cordial shouts of *hear! hear!—encore! encore!* They were immediately turned out, and Scott got through the rest of his harangue very little to his own satisfaction.

He believed, in a word, that he had made a complete failure, and issued from the Court in a melancholy mood. At the door he found Adam Fergusson waiting to inform him that the brethren so unceremoniously extruded from the gallery had sought shelter in a neighbouring tavern, where they hoped he would join them. He complied with the invitation, but seemed for a long while incapable of enjoying the merriment of his friends. "Come, *Duns*," cried *the Baronet*—"cheer up, man, and fill another tumbler; here's ******** going to give us *The Tailor*."—"Ah!" he answered, with a groan, "the tailor was a better man than me, sirs; for he didna venture *ben* until he *kenned the way*." A certain comical old song, which had, perhaps, been a favourite with the Minister of Girthon—

> "The tailor he cam here to sew,
> And weel he kenn'd the way o't," &c.—

was, however, sung and chorussed; and the evening ended in the full jollity of *High Jinks*.

Mr. M'Naught was deposed from the ministry, and his young advocate has written out at the end of the printed papers on the case two of the *songs* which had been alleged in the evidence. They are both grossly indecent. It is to be observed, that the research he had made with a view to pleading this man's cause, carried him for the first, and I believe for the last time, into the scenery of his Guy Mannering; and I may add, that several of the names of the minor characters of the novel (that of *M'Guffog*, for example) appear in the list of witnesses for and against his client.

In the following July, a young lad, who had served for some time with excellent character on board a ship of war, and been discharged in consequence of a wound which disabled one of his hands, had the misfortune, in firing off a toy cannon in one of the narrow wynds of Edinburgh, to kill on the spot one of the doorkeepers of the Advocates' Library; a button, or some other hard substance, having been accidentally inserted with his cartridge. Scott was one of his counsel when he was arraigned for murder, and had occasion to draw up a written argument or *information* for the prisoner, from which also I shall make a short quotation. Considered as a whole, the production seems both crude and clumsy, but the following passages have, I think, several traces of the style of thought and language which he afterwards made familiar to the world.

> "Murder," he writes, "or the premeditated slaughter of a citizen, is a crime of so deep and scarlet a dye, that there is scarce a nation to be found in which it has not, from the earliest period, been deemed worthy of a capital punishment. 'He who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,' is a general maxim which has received the assent of all times and countries. But it is equally certain, that even the rude legislators of former days soon perceived, that the death of one man may be occasioned by another, without the slayer himself being the proper object of the *lex talionis*. Such an accident may happen either by the carelessness of the killer, or through that excess and vehemence of passion to which humanity is incident. In either case, though blameable, he ought not to be confounded with the cool and deliberate assassin, and the species of criminality attaching itself to those acts has been distinguished by the term *dolus*, in opposition to the milder term *culpa*. Again, there may be a third species of homicide, in which the perpetrator being the innocent and unfortunate cause of casual misfortune, becomes rather an object of compassion than punishment.
>
> "Admitting there may have been a certain degree of culpability in the panel's conduct, still there is one circumstance which pleads strongly in his favour, so as to preclude all presumption of *dole*. This is the frequent practice, whether proper or improper, of using this amusement in the streets. It is a matter of public notoriety, that boys of all ages and descriptions are, or at least till the late very proper proclamation of the magistrates, were to be seen every evening in almost every corner of this city amusing themselves with fire-arms and small cannons, and that without being checked or interfered with. When the panel, a poor ignorant raw lad, lately discharged from a ship of war, certainly not the most proper school to learn a prudent aversion to unlucky or mischievous practices, observed the sons of gentlemen of the first respectability engaged in such amusements, unchecked by their parents or by the magistrates, surely it can hardly be expected that he should discover that in imitating them in so common a practice, he was constituting himself *hostis humani generis*, a wretch the pest and scourge of mankind.
>
> "There is, no doubt, attached to every even the most innocent of casual slaughter, a certain degree of blame, inasmuch as almost every thing of the kind might have been avoided had the slayer exhibited the strictest degree of diligence. A well-known and authentic story will illustrate the proposition. A young gentleman just married to a young lady of whom he was passionately fond, in affectionate trifling presented at her a pistol, of which he had drawn the charge some days before. The lady, entering into the joke, desired him to fire: he did so, and shot her dead; the pistol having been again charged by his servant without his knowledge. Can

any one read this story, and feel any emotion but that of sympathy towards the unhappy husband? Can they ever connect the case with an idea of punishment? Yet, divesting it of these interesting circumstances which act upon the imagination, it is precisely that of the panel at your Lordships' bar; and though no one will pretend to say that such a homicide is other than casual, yet there is not the slightest question but it might have been avoided had the killer taken the precaution of examining his piece. But this is not the degree of *culpa* which can raise a misfortune to the pitch of a crime. It is only an instance that no accident can take place without its afterwards being discovered that the chief actor might have avoided committing it, had he been gifted with the spirit of prophecy, or with such an extreme degree of prudence as is almost equally rare.

"In the instance of shooting at butts, or at a bird, the person killed must have been somewhat in the line previous to the discharge of the shot, otherways it could never have come near him. The shooter must therefore have been guilty *culpæ levis seu levissimæ* in firing while the deceased was in such a situation. In like manner, it is difficult to conceive how death should happen in consequence of a boxing or wrestling match, without some excess upon the part of the killer. Nay, in the exercise of the martial amusements of our forefathers, even by royal commission, should a champion be slain in running his barriers, or performing his tournament, it could scarcely happen without some *culpa seu levis seu levissima* on the part of his antagonist. Yet all these are enumerated in the English law-books as instances of casual homicide only; and we may therefore safely conclude, that by the law of the sister country a slight degree of blame will not subject the slayer *per infortunium* to the penalties of culpable homicide.

"Guilt, as an object of punishment, has its origin in the mind and intention of the actor; and therefore, where that is wanting, there is no proper object of chastisement. A madman, for example, can no more properly be said to be guilty of murder than the sword with which he commits it, both being equally incapable of intending injury. In the present case, in like manner, although it ought no doubt to be matter of deep sorrow and contrition to the panel that his folly should have occasioned the loss of life to a fellow-creature; yet as that folly can neither be termed malice, nor yet doth amount to a gross negligence, he ought rather to be pitied than condemned. The fact done can never be recalled, and it rests with your Lordships to consider the case of this unfortunate young man, who has served his country in an humble though useful station,—deserved such a character as is given him in the letter of his officers,—and been disabled in that service. You will best judge how (considering he has suffered a confinement of six months) he can in humanity be the object of further or severer punishment, for a deed of which his mind at least, if not his hand, is guiltless. When a case is attended with some nicety, your Lordships will allow mercy to incline the balance of justice, well considering, with the legislator of the east, 'It is better ten guilty should escape than that one innocent man should perish in his innocence.'"

The young sailor was acquitted.

To return for a moment to Scott's love-affair. I find him writing as follows, in March 1795, to his cousin, William Scott, now Laird of Raeburn, who was then in the East Indies: "The lady you allude to has been in town all this winter, and going a good deal into public, which has not in the least altered the meekness of her manners. Matters, you see, stand just as they did."

To another friend he writes thus, from Rosebank, on the 23d of August, 1795:—

"It gave me the highest satisfaction to find, by the receipt of your letter of the 14th current, that you have formed precisely the same opinion with me, both with regard to the interpretation of —— ——'s letter as highly flattering and favourable, and to the mode of conduct I ought to pursue—for, after all, what she has pointed out is the most prudent line of conduct for us both, at least till better days, which, I think myself now entitled to suppose, she, as well as I myself, will look forward to with pleasure. If you were surprised at reading the important billet, you may guess how agreeably I was so at receiving it; for I had, to anticipate disappointment,—struggled to repress every rising gleam of hope,—and it would be very difficult to describe the mixed feelings her letter occasioned, which, *entre nous*, terminated in a very hearty fit of crying. I read over her epistle about ten times a day, and always with new admiration of her generosity and candour—and as often take shame to myself for the mean suspicions, which, after knowing her so long, I could listen to, while endeavouring to guess how she would conduct herself. To tell you the truth, I cannot but confess, that my *amour propre*, which one would expect should have been exalted, has suffered not a little upon this occasion, through a sense of my own *unworthiness*, pretty similar to that which afflicted Linton upon sitting down at Keir's table. I ought perhaps to tell you, what, indeed, you will perceive from her letter, that I was always attentive, while consulting with you upon the subject of my declaration, rather to under than over-rate the extent of our intimacy. By the way, I must not omit mentioning the respect in which I hold your knowledge of the fair sex, and your capacity of advising in these matters, since it certainly is to your encouragement that I owe the present situation of my affairs. I wish to God, that, since you have acted as so useful an auxiliary during my attack, which has succeeded in bringing the enemy to terms, you would next sit down before some fortress yourself, and were it as impregnable as the rock of Gibraltar, I should, notwithstanding, have the highest expectations of your final success. Not a line from poor Jack—What can he be doing? Moping, I suppose, about some watering-place, and deluging his guts with specifics of every kind—or lowering and snorting in one corner of a post-chaise, with Kennedy, as upright and cold as a poker, stuck into the other. As for Linton, and Crab,* I anticipate with pleasure their marvellous adventures, in the course of which Dr. Black's *self-denying ordinance* will run a shrewd chance of being neglected. They will be a source of fun for the winter evening conversations. Methinks I see the pair upon the mountains of Tipperary—John with a beard of three inches, united and blended with his shaggy black locks, an ellwand-looking cane, with a gilt head, in his hand, and a bundle in a handkerchief over his shoulder, exciting the cupidity of every Irish rapparee who passes him, by his resemblance to a Jew pedlar who has sent forward his pack—Linton, tired of trailing his long legs, exalted in state upon an Irish garron, without stirrups, and a halter on its head, tempting every one to ask,

'Who is that upon the pony,
So long, so lean, so raw, so bony?'†

—calculating, as he moves along, the expenses of the salt horse—and grinning a ghastly smile, when the hollow voice of his fellow-traveller observes, 'God! Adam, if ye gang on at this rate, the eight shillings and sevenpence halfpenny will never carry us forward to my uncle's at Lisburn.' Enough of a thorough Irish expedition.

"We have a great marriage towards here—Scott of Harden, and a daughter of Count Bruhl, the famous chess-player, a lady of sixteen quarters, half-sister to the Wyndhams. I wish they may come down soon, as we shall have fine racketing, of which I will, probably, get my share. I think of being in town sometime next month, but whether for good and all, or only for a visit, I am not certain. O, for November! Our meeting will be a little embarrassing one. How will she look, &c. &c. &c., are the important subjects of my present conjectures—how different from what they were three weeks ago! I give you leave to laugh, when I tell you seriously, I had begun to 'dwindle, peak, and pine,' upon the subject—but now, after the charge I have received, it were a shame to resemble Pharaoh's lean kine. If good living and plenty of exercise can avert that calamity, I am in little danger of disobedience, and so, to conclude classically,

Dicite Io pœan, et Io bis dicite pœan!—
Jubeo te bene valere,

GUALTERUS SCOTT."

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* *Crab* was the nickname of a friend who had accompanied Fergusson this summer on an Irish tour. Dr. Black, celebrated for his discoveries in chemistry, was Adam Fergusson's uncle; and had, it seems, given the young travellers a strong admonition touching the dangers of Irish hospitality.

† These lines are part of a song on the Parliamentary orator Littleton. They are quoted in Boswell's Life of Johnson, originally published in 1791.

I have had much hesitation about inserting the preceding letter, but could not make up my mind to omit what seems to me a most exquisite revelation of the whole character of Scott at this critical period of his history, both literary and personal;—more especially of his habitual effort to suppress, as far as words were concerned, the more tender feelings, which were in no heart deeper than in his.

It must, I think, have been, while he was indulging his *vagabond* vein, during the autumn of 1794, that Miss Aikin (afterwards Mrs. Barbauld) paid her visit to Edinburgh, and entertained a party at Mr. Dugald Stewart's, by reading Mr. William Taylor's then unpublished version of Bürger's Lenore. In the Essay on Imitation of Popular Poetry, the reader has a full account of the interest with which Scott heard, some weeks afterwards, a friend's imperfect recollections of this performance; the anxiety with which he sought after a copy of the original German; the delight with which he at length perused it; and how, having just been reading the specimens of ballad poetry introduced into Lewis's romance of The Monk, he called to mind the early facility of versification which had lain so long in abeyance, and ventured to promise his friend a rhymed translation of "Lenore" from his own pen. The friend in question was Miss Cranstoun, afterwards Countess of Purgstall, the sister of his friend George Cranstoun, now Lord Corehouse. He began the task, he tells us, after supper, and did not retire to bed until he had finished it, having by that time worked himself into a state of excitement which set sleep at defiance.

Next morning, before breakfast, he carried his MS. to Miss Cranstoun, who was not only delighted but astonished at it; for I have seen a letter of hers to a mutual friend in the country, in which she says,—"Upon my word, Walter Scott is going to turn out a poet—something of a cross I think between Burns and Gray." The same day he read it also to his friend Sir Alexander Wood, who retains a vivid recollection of the high strain of enthusiasm into which he had been exalted by dwelling on the wild unearthly imagery of the German bard. "He read it over to me," says Sir Alexander, "in a very slow and solemn tone, and after we had said a few words about its merits, continued to look at the fire silent and musing for some minutes, until he at length burst out with 'I wish to Heaven I could get a scull and two cross-bones.'" Wood said that if he would accompany him to the house of John Bell, the celebrated surgeon, he had no doubt this wish might be easily gratified. They went thither accordingly on the instant;—Mr. Bell (who was a great humourist) smiled on hearing the object of their visit, and pointed to a closet, at the corner of his library, bade Walter enter and choose. From a well-furnished museum of mortality, he selected forthwith what seemed to him the handsomest scull and pair of cross-bones it contained, and wrapping them in his handkerchief, carried the formidable bundle home to George's Square. The trophies were immediately mounted on the top of his little bookcase; and when Wood visited him, after many years of absence from this country, he found them in possession of a similar position in his dressing-room at Abbotsford.

All this occurred in the beginning of April, 1796. A few days afterwards, Scott went to pay a visit at a country house, where he expected to meet the "lady of his love." Jane Anne Cranstoun was in the secret of his attachment, and knew, that however doubtful might be Miss ———'s feelings on that subject, she had a high admiration of Scott's abilities, and often corresponded with him on literary matters; so, after he had left Edinburgh, it occurred to her that she might perhaps forward his views in this quarter, by presenting him in the character of a printed author. William Erskine being called into her councils, a few copies of the ballad were forthwith thrown off in the most elegant style, and one richly bound and blazoned followed Scott in the course of a few days to the country. The verses were read and approved of, and Miss Cranstoun at least flattered herself that he had not made his first appearance in types to no purpose.*

I ought to have mentioned before, that in June, 1795, he was appointed one of the curators of the Advocates' Library, an office always reserved for those members of the faculty who have the reputation of superior zeal in literary affairs. He had for colleagues David Hume, the Professor of Scots Law, and Malcolm Laing, the historian; and his discharge of his functions must have given satisfaction, for I find him further nominated, in March, 1796, together with Mr. Robert Hodgson Cay, an accomplished gentleman, afterwards Judge of the Admiralty Court in Scotland, to 'put the Faculty's cabinet of medals in proper arrangement.'

On the 4th of June, 1796 (the birth-day of George III.), there seems to have been a formidable riot in Edinburgh, and Scott is found again in the front. On the 5th, he writes as follows to his aunt, Christian Rutherford, who was then in the north of Scotland, and had meant to visit, among other places, the residence of the 'chère adorable.'

"Edinburgh, 5th June, 1796.

"Ma Chère Amie,

"Nothing doubting that your curiosity will be upon the tenters to hear the wonderful events of the long-expected 4th of June, I take the pen to inform you that not one worth mentioning has taken place. Were I inclined to prolixity, I might, indeed, narrate at length *how* near a thousand gentlemen (myself among the number) offered their services to the magistrates to act as *constables* for the preservation of the peace—how their services were accepted—what fine speeches were made upon the occasion—*how* they were furnished with pretty painted brown *batons*—*how* they were assembled in the aisle of the New Church, and treated with claret and sweetmeats—*how* Sir John Whiteford was chased by a mob, and how Tom, Sandy Wood, and I rescued him, and dispersed his tormentors *à beaux coups de batons*—*how* the Justice-Clerk's windows were broken by a few boys, and *how* a large body of constables and a press-gang of near two hundred men arrived, and were much disappointed at finding the coast entirely clear; with many other matters of equal importance, but of which you must be contented to remain in ignorance till you return to your castle. Seriously, every thing, with the exception of the very trifling circumstances above mentioned, was perfectly quiet—much more so than during any King's birth-day I can recollect. That very stillness, however, shows that something is brewing among our friends the Democrats, which they will take their own time of bringing forward. By the wise precautions of the magistrates, or rather of the provost, and the spirited conduct of the gentlemen, I hope their designs will be frustrated. Our association meets to-night, when we are to be divided into districts according to the place of our abode, places of rendezvous and captains named; so that, upon the hoisting of a flag on the Tron-steeple, and ringing out all the large bells, we can be on duty in less than five minutes. I am sorry to say that the complexion of the town seems to justify all precautions of this kind. I hope we shall demean ourselves as *quiet* and *peaceable* magistrates; and intend, for the purpose of learning the duties of my new office, to con diligently the instructions delivered to the watch by our brother Dogberry, of facetious memory. So much for information. By way of enquiry, pray let me know—that is, when you find any idle hour—how you accomplished the perilous passage of her Majestie's Ferry without the assistance and escort of your preux-chevalier, and whether you will receive them on your return—how Miss R. and you are spending your time, whether stationary or otherwise—and above all, whether you have been at ******, and all the &ca. &ca. which the question involves. Having made out a pretty long scratch, which, as Win Jenkins says, will take you some time to decipher, I shall only inform you farther that I shall tire excessively till you return to your shop. I beg to be remembered to Miss Kerr, and in particular to La Belle Jeanne. Best love to Miss Rutherford; and believe me ever, my dear Miss Christy, sincerely and affectionately your

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* This story was told by the Countess of Purgstall on her death-bed to Captain Basil Hall. See his *Schloss Hainfeld*, p. 333.

WALTER SCOTT."

During the autumn of 1796 he visited again his favourite haunts in Perthshire and Forfarshire. It was in the course of this tour that he spent a day or two at Montrose with his old tutor Mitchell, and astonished and grieved that worthy Presbyterian by his zeal about witches and fairies. The only letter of his written during this expedition, that I have recovered, was addressed to another of his clerical friends—one by no means of Mitchell's stamp—Mr. Walker, the minister of Dunnotar, and it is chiefly occupied with an account of his researches at a vitrified fort, in Kincardineshire, commonly called *Lady Fenella's Castle*, and, according to tradition, the scene of the murder of Kenneth II. by his mistress. While in the north, he visited also the residence of the lady who had now for so many years been the object of his attachment; and that his reception was not adequate to his expectations may be gathered pretty clearly from some expressions in a letter addressed to him when at Montrose by his friend and confidante, Miss Cranstoun.

To Walter Scott, Esq., Post-Office, Montrose.

"DEAR SCOTT,—Far be it from me to affirm that there are no diviners in the land. The voice of the people and the voice of God are loud in their testimony. Two years ago, when I was in the neighbourhood of Montrose, we had recourse for amusement one evening to chiromancy, or, as the vulgar say, having our fortunes read; and read mine were in such a sort, that either my letters must have been inspected, or the devil was by in his own proper person. I never mentioned the circumstance since, for obvious reasons; but now that you are on the spot, I feel it my bounden duty to conjure you not to put your shoes rashly from off your feet, for you are not standing on holy ground.

"I bless the gods for conducting your poor dear soul safely to Perth. When I consider the wilds, the forests, the lakes, the rocks—and the spirits in which you must have whispered to their startled echoes, it amazeth me how you escaped. Had you but dismissed your little squire and Earwig,* and spent a few days as Orlando would have done, all posterity might have profited by it; but to trot quietly away without so much as one stanza to despair—never talk to me of love again—never, never, never! I am dying for your collection of exploits. When will you return? In the mean time, Heaven speed you! Be sober, and hope to the end.

"William Taylor's translation of your ballad is published, and so inferior, that I wonder we could tolerate it. Dugald Stewart read yours to ******** the other day. When he came to the fetter dance,* he looked up, and poor ********* was sitting with his hands nailed to his knees, and the big tears rolling down his innocent nose in so piteous a manner, that Mr. Stewart could not help bursting out a laughing. An angry man was ********. I have seen another edition too, but it is below contempt. So many copies make the ballad famous, so that every day adds to your renown.

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* A servant boy and pony.

"This here place is very, very dull. Erskine is in London; my dear Thomson at Daily: Macfarlan hatching Kant—and George† Fountainhall.‡ I have nothing more to tell you, but that I am most affectionately yours. Many an anxious thought I have about you. Farewell.—J. A. C."

The affair in which this romantic creature took so lively an interest, was now approaching its end. It was known, before this autumn closed, that the lady of his vows had finally promised her hand to his amiable rival; and, when the fact was announced, some of those who knew Scott the best appear to have entertained very serious apprehensions as to the effect which the disappointment might have upon his feelings. For example, one of those brothers of *the Mountain* wrote as follows to another of them, on the 12th October 1796:—"Mr. —— marries Miss ——. This is not good news. I always dreaded there was some self-deception on the part of our romantic friend, and I now shudder at the violence of his most irritable and ungovernable mind. Who is it that says, 'Men have died, and worms have eaten them, but not for LOVE?' I hope sincerely it may be verified on this occasion."

Scott had, however, in all likelihood, digested his agony during the solitary ride in the Highlands to which Miss Cranstoun's last letter alludes.

Talking of this story with Lord Kinedder, I once asked him whether Scott never made it the subject of verses at the period. His own confession, that, even during the time when he had laid aside the habit of versification, he did sometimes commit "a sonnet on a mistress's eyebrow," had not then appeared. Lord Kinedder answered, "O yes, he made many little stanzas about the lady, and he sometimes showed them to Cranstoun, Clerk, and myself—but we really thought them in general very poor. Two things of the kind, however, have been preserved—and one of them was done just after the conclusion of the business." He then took down a volume of the English Minstrelsy, and pointed out to me some lines *on a violet*, which had not at that time been included in Scott's collected works. Lord Kinedder read them over in his usual impressive, though not quite unaffected manner, and said, "I remember well that, when I first saw these, I told him they were his best; but he had touched them up afterwards."

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* "'Dost fear? dost fear?—The moon shines clear;—
  Dost fear to ride with me?
Hurrah! hurrah! the dead can ride!'—
  'Oh, William, let them be!'

"'See there, see there! What yonder swings
  And creaks 'mid whistling rain?'—
Gibbet and steel, the accursed wheel;
  A murd'rer in his chain.

"'Hollow! thou felon, follow here,
  To bridal bed we ride;
And thou shalt prance a fetter dance
  Before me and my bride."

"And hurry, hurry! clash, clash, clash!
  The wasted form descends;
And fleet as wind, through hazel bush,
  The wild career attends.

"Tramp, tramp! along the land they rode,
  Splash, splash! along the sea;
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
  The flashing pebbles flee."

† George Cranstoun, Lord Corehouse.

‡ Decisions by Lord Fountainhall.

"The violet in her greenwood bower,
Where birchen boughs with hazels mingle,
May boast itself the fairest flower
In glen or copse or forest dingle.

"Though fair her gems of azure hue
Beneath the dew-drop's weight reclining,
I 've seen an eye of lovelier blue
More sweet through watery lustre shining.

"The summer sun that dew shall dry,
Ere yet the sun be past its morrow,
Nor longer in my false love's eye
Remained the tear of parting sorrow!"

In turning over a volume of MS. papers, I have found a copy of verses, which, from the hand, Scott had evidently written down within the last ten years of his life. They are headed, "To Time—by a Lady"—but certain *initials* on the back satisfy me, that the authoress was no other than the object of his first passion. I think I must be pardoned for transcribing the lines which had dwelt so long on his memory—leaving it to the reader's fancy to picture the mood of mind in which the fingers of a grey-haired man may have traced such a relic of his youthful dreams.

"Friend of the wretch oppress'd with grief,
Whose lenient hand, though slow, supplies
The balm that lends to care relief,
That wipes her tears—that checks her sighs!

"'T is thine the wounded soul to heal
That hopeless bleeds for sorrow's smart,
From stern misfortune's shaft to steal
The barb that rankles in the heart.

"What though with thee the roses fly,
And jocund youth's gay reign is o'er;
Though dimm'd the lustre of the eye,
And hope's vain dreams enchant no more;

"Yet in thy train come soft-eyed peace,
Indifference with her heart of snow;
At her cold touch, lo! sorrows cease,
No thorns beneath her roses grow.

"O haste to grant the suppliant's prayer,
To me thy torpid calm impart;
Rend from my brow youth's garland fair,
But take the thorn that 's in my heart.

"Ah, why do fabling poets tell,
That thy fleet wings outstrip the wind,
Why feign thy course of joy the knell,
And call thy slowest pace unkind?

"To me thy tedious feeble pace
Comes laden with the weight of years—
With sighs I view morn's blushing face,
And hail mild evening with my tears."

CHAPTER VIII.

PUBLICATION OF BALLADS AFTER BURGER—SCOTT QUARTER-MASTER OF THE EDINBURGH LIGHT-HORSE—EXCURSION TO CUMBERLAND—GILSLAND WELLS—MISS CARPENTER—MARRIAGE.—1796-1797.

REBELLING, as usual, against circumstances, Scott seems to have turned with renewed ardour to his literary pursuits; and in that same October, 1796, he was "prevailed on," as he playfully expresses it, "by the *request of friends*, to indulge his own vanity, by publishing the translation of Lenore, with that of the Wild Huntsman, also from Bürger, in a thin quarto." The little volume, which has no author's name on the title-page, was printed for Manners and Miller of Edinburgh. The first named of these respectable publishers had been a fellow-student in the German class of Dr. Willich; and the circumstance probably suggested the negotiation. It was conducted by William Erskine, as appears from his postscript to a letter addressed to Scott by his sister, who, before it reached its destination, had become the wife of Mr. Campbell (Colquhoun) of Clathick (and Kellermont) —in after-days Lord Advocate of Scotland. This was another of Scott's dearest female friends—the humble home which she shared with her brother during his early struggles at the bar, had been the scene of many of his happiest hours; and her letter affords such a pleasing idea of the warm affectionateness of the little circle, that I cannot forbear inserting it.

To Walter Scott, Esq. Rosebank, Kelso.

"Monday Evening.

"If it were not that etiquette and I were constantly at war, I should think myself very blamable in thus trespassing against one of its laws; but as it is long since I forswore its dominion, I have acquired a prescriptive right to act as I will —and I shall accordingly anticipate the station of a *matron* in addressing *a young man*.

"I can express but a very, very little of what I feel, and shall ever feel for your unintermitting friendship and attention. I have ever considered you as a brother, and shall *now* think myself entitled to make even larger claims on your confidence. Well do I remember the *dark* conference we lately held together! The intention of unfolding *my own* future fate was often at my lips.

"I cannot tell you my distress at leaving this house, wherein I have enjoyed so much real happiness, and giving up the service of so gentle a master, whose yoke was indeed easy. I will therefore only commend him to your care as the last bequest of Mary Ann Erskine, and conjure you to continue to each other through all your pilgrimage as you have commenced it. May every happiness attend you. Adieu!

Your most sincere friend and sister,

M. A. E."

Mr. Erskine writes on the other page—"The poems are gorgeous, but I have made no bargain with any bookseller. I have told M. and M. that I won't be satisfied with indemnity, but an offer must be made. They will be out before the end of the week." On what terms the publication really took place I know not.

It has already been mentioned, that Scott owed his copy of Bürger's works to the young lady of Harden, whose marriage occurred in the autumn of 1795. She was daughter of Count Brühl of Martkirchen, long Saxon ambassador at the court of St. James's, by his second wife the Countess-Dowager of Egremont; and though I believe she had never at this time been out of England, spoke her father's language perfectly, corresponded regularly with many of her relations on the Continent, and was very fond of the rising literature of the Germans. The young kinsman was introduced to her soon after her arrival at Mertoun, and his attachment to German studies excited her attention and interest. Mrs. Scott supplied him with many standard German books, besides Bürger; and the gift of an Adelung's dictionary from his old ally, George Constable (Jonathan Oldbuck,) enabled him to master their contents sufficiently for the purposes of translation. The ballad of the Wild Huntsman appears to have been executed, under Mrs. Scott's eye, during the month that preceded his first publication; and he was thenceforth engaged in a succession of versions from the dramas of Meier and Iffland, several of which are still extant in his MS., marked 1796 and 1797. These are all in prose like their originals; but he also versified at the same time some lyrical fragments of Goethe, as, for example, the Morlachian Ballad,

" What yonder glimmers so white on the mountain,

and the song from Claudina von Villa Bella. He consulted his friend at Mertoun on all these essays; and I have often heard him say, that, among those many " obligations of a distant date which remained impressed on his memory, after a life spent in a constant interchange of friendship and kindness," he counted not as the least the lady's frankness in correcting his Scotticisms, and more especially his Scottish *rhymes*.

His obligations to this lady were indeed various—but I doubt, after all, whether these were the most important. He used to say, that she was the first *woman of real fashion* that *took him* up; and she used the privileges of her sex and station in the truest spirit of kindness; set him right as to a thousand little trifles, which no one else would have ventured to notice; and, in short, did for him what no one but an elegant woman can do for a young man, whose early days have been spent in narrow and provincial circles. "When I first saw Sir Walter," she writes to me, "he was about four or five-and-twenty, but looked much younger. He seemed bashful and awkward; but there were from the first such gleams of superior sense and spirit in his conversation, that I was hardly surprised when, after our acquaintance had ripened a little, I felt myself to be talking with a man of genius. He was most modest about himself, and showed his little pieces apparently without any consciousness that they could possess any claim on particular attention. Nothing so easy and good-humoured as the way in which he received any hints I might offer, when he seemed to be tampering with the King's English. I remember particularly how he laughed at himself, when I made him take notice that 'the little two dogs,' in some of his lines, did not please an English ear accustomed to 'the two little dogs.'"

Nor was this the only person at Mertoun who took a lively interest in his pursuits. Harden entered into all the feelings of his beautiful bride on this subject; and his mother, the Lady Diana Scott, daughter of the last Earl of Marchmont, did so no less. She had conversed, in her early days, with the brightest ornaments of the cycle of Queen Anne, and preserved rich stores of anecdote, well calculated to gratify the curiosity and excite the ambition of a young enthusiast in literature. Lady Diana soon appreciated the minstrel of the clan; and surviving to a remarkable age, she had the satisfaction of seeing him at the height of his eminence—the solitary person who could give the author of Marmion personal reminiscences of Pope.*

On turning to James Ballantyne's *Memorandum* (already quoted,) I find an account of Scott's journey from Rosebank to Edinburgh, in the November after the Ballads from Bürger were published, which gives an interesting notion of his literary zeal and opening ambition at this remarkable epoch of his life. Mr. Ballantyne had settled in Kelso as a solicitor in 1795; but not immediately obtaining much professional practice, time hung heavy on his hands, and he willingly listened, in the summer of 1796, to a proposal of some of the neighbouring nobility and gentry respecting the establishment of a weekly newspaper,† in opposition to one of a democratic tendency, then widely circulated in Roxburghshire and the other Border counties. He undertook the printing and editing of this new journal, and proceeded to London, in order to engage correspondents and make other necessary preparations. While thus for the first time in the metropolis, he happened to meet with two authors, whose reputations were then in full bloom—namely, Thomas Holcroft and William Godwin—the former a popular dramatist and novelist; the latter, a novelist of far greater merit, but "still more importantly distinguished," says the Memorandum before me, "by those moral, legal, political, and religious heterodoxies, which his talents enabled him to present to the world, in a very captivating manner. His Caleb Williams had then just come out, and occupied as much public attention as any work has done before or since." "Both these eminent persons," Ballantyne continues, "I saw pretty frequently; and being anxious to hear whatever I could tell about the literary men in Scotland, they both treated me with remarkable freedom of communication. They were both distinguished by the clearness of their elocution, and very full of triumphant confidence in the truth of their systems. They were as willing to speak, therefore, as I could be to hear; and as I put my questions with all the fearlessness of a very young man, the result was, that I carried away copious and interesting stores of thought and information; that the greater part of what I heard was full of error, never entered into my contemplation. Holcroft at this time was a fine-looking, lively man, of green old age, somewhere about sixty. Godwin, some twenty years younger, was more shy and reserved. As to me, my delight and enthusiasm were boundless."

After returning home, Ballantyne made another journey to Glasgow for the purchase of types; and, on entering the Kelso coach for this purpose—"It would not be easy," says he, "to express my joy on finding that Mr. Scott was to be one of my partners in the carriage, the only other passenger being a fine, stout, muscular, old Quaker. A very few miles re-established us on our ancient footing. Travelling not being half so speedy then as it is now, there was plenty of leisure for talk, and Mr. Scott was exactly what is called the old man. He abounded, as in the days of boyhood, in legendary lore, and had now added to the black, as his recitations showed, many of those fine ballads which afterwards composed the Minstrelsy. Indeed, I was more delighted with him than ever; and, by way of reprisal, I opened on him my London budget collected from Holcroft and Godwin. I doubt if Boswell ever showed himself a more skilful *Reporter* than I did on this occasion. Hour after hour passed away, and found my borrowed eloquence still flowing, and my companion still hanging on my lips with unwearied interest. It was customary in those days to break the journey (only forty miles) by dining on the road, the consequence of which was that we soon became rather oblivious; and after we had re-entered the coach, the worthy Quaker felt quite vexed and disconcerted with the silence which had succeeded so much conversation. 'I wish,' said he, 'my young friends, that you would cheer up, and go on with your pleasant songs and tales as before: they entertained me much.' And so," says Ballantyne, "it went on again until the evening found us in Edinburgh; and from that day, until a very short time of his death—a period of not less than five-and-thirty years—I may venture to say that our intercourse never flagged."

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* Mr. Scott of Harden's right to the peerage of Polwarth, as representing, through his mother, the line of Marchmont, was allowed by the House of Lords in 1835.

† The Kelso Mail.

The reception of the two ballads had, in the mean time, been favourable, in his own circle at least. The many inaccuracies to which he alludes in republishing them towards the close of his life, did not prevent real lovers of poetry from seeing that no one but a poet could have transfused the daring imagery of the German in a style so free, bold, masculine, and full of life; but, wearied as all such readers had been with that succession of feeble, flimsy, lackadaisical trash which followed the appearance of the Reliques by Bishop Percy, the opening of such a new vein of popular poetry as these verses revealed would have been enough to produce lenient critics for far inferior translations. Many, as we have seen, sent forth copies of the Lenore about the same time; and some of these might be thought better than Scott's in particular passages; but, on the whole, it seems to be felt and acknowledged by those best entitled to judge, that he deserved the palm. Meantime, we must not forget that Scotland had lost that very year the great poet Burns, her glory and her shame. It is at least to be hoped that a general sentiment of self-reproach, as well as of sorrow, had been excited by the premature extinction of such a light; and, at all events, it is agreeable to know that they who had watched his career with the most affectionate concern were among the first to hail the promise of a more fortunate successor. Scott found on his table, when he reached Edinburgh, the following letters from two of Burns's kindest and wisest friends:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Advocate, George's Square.

"My Dear Sir,

"I beg you will accept of my best thanks for the favour you have done me by sending me four copies of your beautiful translations. I shall retain two of them, as Mrs. Stewart and I set a high value on them as gifts from the author. The other two I shall take the earliest opportunity of transmitting to a friend in England, who, I hope, may be instrumental in making their merits more generally known at the time of their first appearance. In a few weeks, I am fully persuaded, they will engage public attention to the utmost extent of your wishes, without the aid of any recommendation whatever. I ever am, Dear Sir, yours, most truly,

"Dugald Stewart.

"Canongate, Wednesday evening."

To the Same.

"Dear Sir,

"On my return from Cardross, where I had been for a week I found yours of the 14th, which had surely loitered by the way. I thank you most cordially for your present. I meet with little poetry nowadays that touches my heart; but your translations excite mingled emotions of pity and terror, insomuch, that I would not wish any person of weaker nerves to read *William and Helen* before going to bed. Great must be the original if it equals the translation in energy and pathos. One would almost suspect you have used as much liberty with Bürger as Macpherson was suspected of doing with Ossian. It is, however, easier to *backspeir* you. Sober reason rejects the machinery as unnatural; it reminds me, however, of the magic of Shakspeare. Nothing has a finer effect than the repetition of certain words, that are echoes to the sense, as much as the celebrated lines in Homer about the rolling up and falling down of the stone:—*Tramp, tramp, splash, splash*, is to me perfectly new;—and much of the imagery is nature. I should consider this same muse of yours (if you carry the intrigue far) more likely to steal your heart from the law than even a wife. I am, Dear Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

Jo. Ramsay.

"Ochtertyre, 30th Nov. 1796."

Among other literary persons at a distance, I may mention George Chalmers, the celebrated antiquary, with whom he had been in correspondence from the beginning of this year, supplying him with Border ballads for the illustration of his researches into Scotch history. This gentleman had been made acquainted with Scott's large collections in that way, by a mutual friend, Dr. Somerville, minister of Jedburgh, author of the History of Queen Anne;* and the numerous MS. copies communicated to him in consequence, were recalled in the course of 1799, when the plan of the "Minstrelsy" began to take shape. Chalmers writes in great transports about Scott's versions; but weightier encouragement came from Mr. Taylor of Norwich, himself the first translator of the Lenore.

"I need not tell you, sir" (he writes), "with how much eagerness I opened your volume—with how much glow I followed *the Chase*—or with how much alarm I came to *William and Helen.* Of the latter I will say nothing; praise might seem hypocrisy—criticism envy. The ghost nowhere makes his appearance so well as with you, or his exit so well as with Mr. Spenser. I like very much the recurrence of

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* Some extracts from this venerable person's unpublished Memoirs of his own Life, have been kindly sent to me by his son, the well-known physician of Chelsea College; from which it appears that the reverend doctor, and more particularly still his wife, a lady of remarkable talent and humour, had formed a high notion of Scott's future eminence at a very early period of his life. Dr. S. survived to a great old age, preserving his faculties quite entire, and I have spent many pleasant hours under his hospitable roof in company with Sir Walter Scott. We heard him preach an excellent circuit-sermon when he was upwards of ninety-two, and at the Judges' dinner afterwards he was among the gayest of the company.

> 'The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
> The flashing pebbles flee,'

but of *William and Helen* I had resolved to say nothing. Let me return to *the Chase*, of which the metric stanza pleases me entirely—yet I think a few passages written in too elevated a strain for the general spirit of the poem. This age leans too much to the Darwin style. Mr. Percy's Lenore owes its coldness to the adoption of this; and it seems peculiarly incongruous in the ballad—where habit has taught us to expect simplicity. Among the passages too stately and pompous, I should reckon—

> 'The mountain echoes startling wake—
> And for devotion's choral swell
> Exchange the rude discordant noise—
> Fell famine marks the maddening throng
> With cold Despair's averted eye'—

and perhaps one or two more. In the twenty-first stanza I prefer Bürger's *trampling the corn into chaff and dust*, to your more metaphorical, and therefore less picturesque, 'destructive sweep the field along.' In the thirtieth, 'On whirlwind's pinions swiftly borne,' to me seems less striking than the still disapparition of the tumult and bustle—the earth has opened, and he is sinking with his evil genius to the nether world—as he approaches, *dumpf rauscht es wie ein ferner meer*—it should be rendered, therefore, not by 'Save what a distant torrent gave,' but by some sounds which shall necessarily excite the idea of being *hellsprung*—the sound of simmering seas of fire—pinings of goblins damned—or some analogous noise. The forty-seventh stanza is a very great improvement upon the original. The profanest blasphemous speeches need not have been softened down, as in proportion to the impiety of the provocation, increases the poetical probability of the final punishment. I should not have ventured upon these criticisms, if I did not think it required a microscopic eye to make any, and if I did not on the whole consider *the Chase* as a most spirited and beautiful translation. I remain (to borrow in another sense a concluding phrase from the Spectator), your constant admirer,

"W. TAYLOR, Jun.

"Norwich, 14th Dec. 1796."

The anticipations of these gentlemen, that Scott's versions would attract general attention in the south, were not fulfilled. He himself attributes this to the contemporaneous appearance of so many other translations from Lenore. "In a word," he says, "my adventure, where so many pushed off to sea, proved a dead loss, and a great part of the edition was condemned to the service of the trunkmaker. This failure did not operate in any unpleasant degree either on my feelings or spirits. I was coldly received by strangers, but my reputation began rather to increase among my own friends, and on the whole I was more bent to show the world that it had neglected something worth notice, than to be affronted by its indifference; or rather, to speak candidly, I found pleasure in the literary labours in which I had almost by accident become engaged, and laboured less in the hope of pleasing others, though certainly without despair of doing so, than in a pursuit of a new and agreeable amusement to myself."*

On the 12th of December, Scott had the curiosity to witness the trial of one James Mackean, a shoemaker, for the murder of Buchanan, a carrier, employed to convey money weekly from the Glasgow bank to a manufacturing establishment at Lanark. Mackean invited the carrier to spend the evening in his house; conducted family worship in a style of much seeming fervour; and then, while his friend was occupied, came behind him, and almost severed his head from his body by one stroke of a razor. I have heard Scott describe the sanctimonious air which the murderer maintained during his trial—preserving throughout the aspect of a devout person, who believed himself to have been hurried into his accumulation of crime by an uncontrollable exertion of diabolical influence; and on his copy of the "Life of James Mackean, executed 25th January, 1797," I find the following marginal note:—

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* Remarks on Popular Poetry. 1830.

"I went to see this wretched man when under sentence of death, along with my friend, Mr. William Clerk, advocate. His great anxiety was to convince us that his diabolical murder was committed from a sudden impulse of revengeful and violent passion, not from deliberate design of plunder. But the contrary was manifest from the accurate preparation of the deadly instrument, a razor strongly lashed to an iron bolt, and also from the evidence on the trial, from which it seems he had invited his victim to drink tea with him on the day he perpetrated the murder, and that this was a reiterated invitation. Mackean was a good-looking, elderly man, having a thin face and clear grey eye; such a man as may be ordinarily seen beside a collection-plate at a seceding meeting-house, a post which the said Mackean had occupied in his day. All Mackean's account of the murder is apochryphal. Buchanan was a powerful man, and Mackean slender. It appeared that the latter had engaged Buchanan in writing, then suddenly clapped one hand on his eyes, and struck the fatal blow with the other. The throat of the deceased was cut through his handkerchief to the back bone of the neck, against which the razor was hacked in several places."

In his pursuit of his German studies Scott acquired, about this time, a very important assistant in Mr. Skene of Rubislaw, in Aberdeenshire; a gentleman considerably his junior, who had just returned to Scotland from a residence of several years in Saxony, where he had obtained a thorough knowledge of the language, and accumulated a better collection of German books than any to which Scott had, as yet, found access. Shortly after Mr. Skene's arrival in Edinburgh, Scott requested to be introduced to him by a mutual friend, Mr. Edmonstone of Newton, and their fondness for the same literature, with Scott's eagerness to profit by his new acquaintance's superior attainment in it, thus opened an intercourse which general similarity of tastes, and I venture to add, in many of the most important features of character, soon ripened into the familiarity of a tender friendship—"An intimacy," Mr. Skene says, in a paper before me, "of which I shall ever think with so much pride—a friendship so pure and cordial as to have been able to withstand all the vicissitudes of nearly forty years, without ever having sustained even a casual chill from unkind thought or word." Mr. Skene adds: "During the whole progress of his varied life, to that eminent station which he could not but feel he at length held in the estimation, not of his countrymen alone, but of the whole world, I never could perceive the slightest shade of variance from that simplicity of character with which he impressed me on the first hour of our meeting."

Among the common tastes which served to knit these friends together, was their love of horsemanship, in which, as in all other manly exercises, Skene highly excelled; and the fears of a French invasion becoming every day more serious, their thoughts were turned with corresponding zeal to the project of organizing a force of mounted volunteers in Scotland. "The London Light-horse has set the example"—(says Mr. Skene)—"but in truth it was to Scott's ardour that this force in the North owed its origin. Unable, by reason of his lameness, to serve amongst his friends on foot, he had nothing for it but to rouse the spirit of the moss-trooper, with which he readily inspired all who possessed the means of substituting the sabre for the musket."

On the 14th February, 1797, these friends and many more met and drew up an offer to serve as a body of volunteer cavalry in Scotland; which offer, being transmitted through the Duke of Buccleuch, Lord-Lieutenant of Mid-Lothian, was accepted by government. The organization of the corps proceeded rapidly; they extended their offer to serve in any part of the island in case of actual invasion; and this also being accepted, the whole arrangement was shortly completed; when Charles Maitland, Esq. of Rankeillor, was elected Major-Commandant; (Sir) William Rae of St. Catharine's, Captain; James Gordon of Craig, and George Robinson of Clermiston, Lieutenants; (Sir) William Forbes of Pitsligo, and James Skene of Rubislaw, Cornets; Walter Scott, Paymaster, Quartermaster, and Secretary; John Adams, Adjutant. But the treble duties thus devolved on Scott were found to interfere too severely with his other avocations, and Colin Mackenzie of Portmore relieved him soon afterwards from those of paymaster.

"The part of quartermaster," says Mr. Skene, "was properly selected for him, that he might be spared the rough usage of the ranks; but, notwithstanding his infirmity, he had a remarkably firm seat on horseback, and in all situations a fearless one: no fatigue ever seemed too much for him, and his zeal and animation served to sustain the enthusiasm of the whole corps, while his ready 'mot à rire,' kept up, in all, a degree of good-humour and relish for the service, without which, the toil and privations of long *daily* drills would not easily have been submitted to by such a body of gentlemen. At every interval of exercise, the order, *sit at ease*, was the signal for the quartermaster to lead the squadron to merriment; every eye was intuitively turned on 'Earl Walter,' as he was familiarly called by his associates of that date, and his ready joke seldom failed to raise the ready laugh. He took his full share in all the labours and duties of the corps, had the highest pride in its progress and proficiency, and was such a trooper himself, as only a very powerful frame of body and the warmest zeal in the cause could have enabled any one to be. But his habitual good-humour was the great charm; and at the daily mess (for we all dined together when in quarters) that reigned supreme."

Earl Walter's first charger, by the way, was a tall and powerful animal named *Lenore*. These daily drills appear to have been persisted in during the spring and summer of 1797; the corps spending moreover some weeks in quarters at Musselburgh. The majority of the troop having professional duties to attend to, the ordinary hour for drill was five in the morning; and when we reflect, that after some hours of hard work in this way, Scott had to produce himself regularly in the Parliament House with gown and wig, for the space of four or five hours at least, while his chamber practice, though still humble, was on the increase—and that he had found a plentiful source of new social engagements in his troop connexions—it certainly could have excited no surprise had his literary studies been found suffering total intermission during this busy period. That such was not the case, however, his correspondence and note-books afford ample evidence.

He had no turn, at this time of his life, for early rising; so that the regular attendance at the morning drills was of itself a strong evidence of his military zeal; but he must have, in spite of them, and of all other circumstances, persisted in what was the usual custom of all his earlier life, namely, the devotion of the best hours of the night to solitary study. In general, both as a young man, and in more advanced age, his constitution required a good allowance of sleep, and he, on principle, indulged in it, saying, "he was but half a man if he had not full seven hours of utter unconsciousness;" but his whole mind and temperament were, at this period, in a state of most fervent exaltation, and spirit triumphed over matter. His translation of Steinburg's Otho of Wittelsbach, is marked "1796–7;" from which, I conclude, it was finished in the latter year. The volume containing that of Meier's "Wolfred of Dromberg, a drama of chivalry," is dated 1797; and, I think, the reader will presently see cause to suspect, that though not attended to in his imperfect note-book, these tasks must have been accomplished in the very season of the daily drills.

The letters addressed to him in March, April, and June, by Kerr of Abbotrule, George Chalmers, and his uncle at Rosebank, indicate his unabated interest in the collection of [illegible]s and ballads; and I shall now make a few extracts from his private note-book, some of which will at all events amuse the survivors of the Edinburgh Light-Horse:

"*March* 15, 1797.—Read Stanfield's trial, and the conviction appears very doubtful indeed. Surely no one could seriously believe, in 1688, that the body of the murdered bleeds at the touch of the murderer, and I see little else that directly touches Philip Stanfield. He was a very bad character, however; and tradition says, that having insulted Welsh, the wild preacher, one day in his early life, the saint called from the pulpit that God had revealed to him that this blasphemous youth would die in the sight of as many as were then assembled. It was believed at the time that Lady Stanfield had a hand in the assassination, or was at least privy to her son's plans; but I see nothing inconsistent with the old gentleman's having committed suicide.* The ordeal of touching the corpse was observed in Germany. They call it *barrecht.*

"*March* 27.—

'The friers of Fail
Gat never owre hard eggs, or owre thin kale;
For they made their eggs thin wi' butter,
And their kale thick wi' bread.
And the friers of Fail they made gude kale
On Fridays when they fasted;
They never wanted gear enough
As lang as their neighbours' lasted.'

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* See particulars of Stanfield's case in Lord Fountainhall's Chronological Notes of Scottish Affairs, 1680–1701 edited by Sir Walter Scott. 4to, Edinburgh, 1822. Pp. 233–236.

"Fairy rings.—N. B. Delrius says the same appearance occurs wherever the witches have held their Sabbath.

"For the ballad of 'Willie's Lady,' compare Apuleius, lib. i. p. 33. . . .

"*April* 20.—The portmanteau to contain the following articles:—2 shirts; 1 black handkerchief; 1 night-cap, woollen; 1 pair pantaloons, blue; 1 flannel shirt with sleeves; 1 pair flannel drawers; 1 waistcoat; 1 pair worsted stockings or socks.

"In the slip in cover of portmanteau, a case with shaving-things, combs, and a knife, fork, and spoon; a German pipe and tobacco-bag, flint, and steel; pipe-clay and oil, with a brush for laying it on; a shoe-brush; a pair of shoes or hussar-boots; a horse-picker, and other loose articles.

"Belt with the flap and portmanteau, curry-comb, brush, and mane-comb, with sponge.

"Over the portmanteau the blue overalls, and a spare jacket for stable; a small horse-sheet, to cover the horse's back with, and a spare girth or two.

"In the cartouche-box, screw-driver and picker for pistol, with three or four spare flints.

"The horse-sheet may be conveniently folded below the saddle, and will save the back in a long march or bad weather. Beside the holster, two fore-feet shoes.*

"*May* 22.—Apuleius, lib. ii. . . . . Anthony-a-Wood. . . . . . Mr. Jenkinson's name (now Lord Liverpool) being proposed as a difficult one to rhyme to, a lady present hit off this verse extempore. N. B. Both father and son (Lord Hawkesbury) have a peculiarity of vision.

'Happy Mr. Jenkinson,
Happy Mr. Jenkinson
I'm sure to you
Your lady's true,
For you have got a winking son.'

"23.—Delrius. . . .

"24.—'I, John Bell of Brackenbrig, lies under this stane;
Four of my sons laid it on my wame.
I was a man of my meat, and master of my wife,
And lived in mine ain house without meikle strife.
Gif if thou be'st a better man in thy time than I was in mine,
Tak this stane off my [illegible]e, and lay it upon thine.'

"25.—Meric Casaubon on Sp[illegible]. . . . .

"26.—'There saw we learned [illegible]roe's golden tombe;
The way he cut an English mile in length
Thorow a rock of stone in one night's space.'

"Christopher Marlowe's Tragicall History of Dr. Faustus—a very remarkable thing. Grand subject—end grand. . . . . . Copied 'Prophecy of Merlin' from Mr. Clerk's MS.

"27.—Read Everybody's Business is Nobody's Business, by Andrew Moreton. This was one of Defoe's many *aliases*—like his pen, in parts . . . . .

'To Cuthbert, Car, and Collingwood, to Shafto and to Hall;
To every gallant generous heart that for King James did fall.'

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* Some of Scott's most intimate friends at the Bar, no doubt from entertaining political opinions of another cast, were by no means disposed to sympathize with the demonstrations of his military enthusiasm at this period. For example, one of these gentlemen thus writes to another in April, 1797: — "By the way, Scott is become the merest trooper that ever was begotten by a drunken dragoon on his trull in a hay-loft. Not an idea crosses his mind, or a word his lips, that has not an allusion to some d——d instrument or evolution of the Cavalry—'draw your swords—by single files to the right of front—to the left wheel—charge.' After all, he knows little more about wheels and charges than I do about the wheels of Ezekiel, or the king of Pelew about charges of horning on six days' date. I saw them charge on Leith Walk a few days ago, and I assure you it was by no means orderly proceeded. Clerk and I are continually obliged to open a six-pounder upon him in self-defence, but in spite of a temporary confusion, he soon rallies and returns to the attack.

"28.—. . . . . Anthony-a-Wood. . . . . Plain Proof of the True Father and Mother of the Pretended Prince of Wales, by W. Fuller. This fellow was pilloried for a forgery some years later. . . . . Began *Nathan der Weise*.

"*June* 29.—Read Introduction to a Compendium on Brief Examination, by W. S.—viz. William Stafford—though it was for a time given to no less a W. S. than William Shakspeare. A curious treatise—the Political Economy of the Elizabethan Day—worth reprinting. . . . .

"*July* 1.—Read Discourse of Military discipline, by Captain Barry—a very curious account of the famous Low Countries' armies—full of military hints worth note. . . . . . *Anthony Wood* again.

"3.—*Nathan der Weise*. . . . . *Delrius*. . . . .

"5.—Geutenberg's *Braut* begun.

"6.—The Bride again. Delrius."

The note-book from which I have been copying is chiefly filled with extracts from Apuleius and Anthony-a-Wood—most of them bearing, in some way, on the subject of popular superstitions. It is a pity that many leaves have been torn out; for if unmutilated, the record would probably have enabled one to guess whether he had already planned his "Essay on Fairies."

I have mentioned his business at the bar as increasing at the same time. His *fee-book* is now before me, and it shows that he made by his first year's practice £24, 3s.; by the second, £57, 15s.; by the third, £84, 4s.; by the fourth, £90; and in his fifth year at the bar—that is, from November, 1796, to July, 1797—£144, 10s.; of which £50 were fees from his father's chamber.

His friend, Charles Kerr of Abbotrule, had been residing a good deal about this time in Cumberland: indeed, he was so enraptured with the scenery of the lakes as to take a house in Keswick with the intention of spending half of all future years there. His letters to Scott (March, April, 1797) abound in expressions of wonder that he should continue to devote so much of his vacations to the Highlands of Scotland, "with every crag and precipice of which," says he, "I should imagine you would be familiar by this time; nay, that the goats themselves might almost claim you for an acquaintance;" while another district lay so near him at least as well qualified "to give a swell to the fancy."

After the rising of the Court of Session in July, Scott accordingly set out on a tour to the English lakes, accompanied by his brother John, and Adam Ferguson. Their first stage was Halyards, in Tweeddale, then inhabited by his friend's father, the philosopher and historian; and they staid there for a day or two, in the course of which Scott had his first and only interview with David Ritchie, the original of his Black Dwarf.* Proceeding southward, the tourists visited Carlisle, Penrith,—the vale of the Eamont, including Mayburgh and Brougham Castle,—Ulswater and Windermere; and at length fixed their head quarters at the then peaceful and sequestered little watering place of Gilsland, making excursions from thence to the various scenes of romantic interest which are commemorated in The Bridal of Triermain, and otherwise leading very much the sort of life depicted among the loungers of St. Ronan's Well. Scott was, on his first arrival at Gilsland, not a little engaged with the beauty of one of the young ladies lodged under the same roof with him; and it was on occasion of a visit in her company to some part of the Roman Wall that he indited his lines—

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* See the Introduction to this Novel in the edition of 1830.

> "Take these flowers, which, purple waving,
> On the ruined rampart grew," &c.[*]

But this was only a passing glimpse of flirtation. A week or so afterwards commenced a more serious affair.

Riding one day with Ferguson, they met, some miles from Gilsland, a young lady taking the air on horseback, whom neither of them had previously remarked, and whose appearance instantly struck both so much, that they kept her in view until they had satisfied themselves that she also was one of the party at Gilsland. The same evening there was a ball, at which Captain Scott produced himself in his regimentals, and Ferguson also thought proper to be equipped in the uniform of the Edinburgh Volunteers. There was no little rivalry among the young travellers as to who should first get presented to the unknown beauty of the morning's ride; but though both the gentlemen in scarlet had the advantage of being dancing partners, their friend succeeded in handing the fair stranger to supper—and such was his first introduction to Charlotte Margaret Carpenter.

Without the features of a regular beauty, she was rich in personal attractions; "a form that was fashioned as light as a fay's;" a complexion of the clearest and lightest olive; eyes large, deep-set and dazzling, of the finest Italian brown; and a profusion of silken tresses, black as the raven's wing—her address hovering between the reserve of a pretty young Englishwoman who has not mingled largely in general society, and a certain natural archness and gaiety that suited well with the accompaniment of a French accent. A lovelier vision, as all who remember her in the bloom of her days have assured me, could hardly have been imagined; and from that hour the fate of the young poet was fixed.

She was the daughter of Jean Charpentier, of Lyons, a devoted royalist, who held an office under Government,[†] and Charlotte Volere, his wife. She and her only brother, Charles Charpentier, had been educated in the Protestant religion of their mother; and when their father died, which occurred in the beginning of the Revolution, Madame Charpentier made her escape with her children, first to Paris, and then to England, where they found a warm friend and protector in the late Marquis of Downshire, who had, in the course of his travels in France, formed an intimate acquaintance with the family, and, indeed, spent some time under their roof. M. Charpentier had, in his first alarm as to the coming Revolution, invested £4000 in English securities—part in a mortgage upon Lord Downshire's estates. On the mother's death, which occurred soon after her arrival in London, this nobleman took on himself the character of sole guardian to her children; and Charles

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[*] I owe this circumstance to the recollection of Mr. Claud Russel, accountant in Edinburgh, who was one of the party. Previously I had always supposed these verses to have been inspired by Miss Carpenter.

[†] In several deeds which I have seen, M. Charpentier is designated "Ecuyer du roi." What the post he held was I never heard.

Charpentier received in due time, through his interest, an appointment in the service of the East India Company, in which he had by this time risen to the lucrative situation of commercial resident at Salem. His sister was now making a little excursion, under the care of the lady who had superintended her education, Miss Jane Nicolson, a daughter of Dr. Nicolson, dean of Exeter, and grand-daughter of William Nicolson, Bishop of Carlisle, well known as the editor of "The English Historical Library." To some connexions which the learned prelate's family had ever since his time kept up in the diocese of Carlisle, Miss Carpenter owed the direction of her summer tour.

Scott's father was now in a very feeble state of health, which accounts for his first announcement of this affair being made in a letter to his mother; it is undated;—but by this time the young lady had left Gilsland for Carlisle, where she remained until her destiny was settled.

To Mrs. Scott, George's Square, Edinburgh.

"My Dear Mother,

"I should very ill deserve the care and affection with which you have ever regarded me, were I to neglect my duty so far as to omit consulting my father and you in the most important step which I can possibly take in life, and upon the success of which my future happiness must depend. It is with pleasure, I think, that I can avail myself of your advice and instructions in an affair of so great importance as that which I have at present on my hands. You will probably guess from this preamble, that I am engaged in a matrimonial plan, which is really the case. Though my acquaintance with the young lady has not been of long standing, this circumstance is in some degree counterbalanced by the intimacy in which we have lived, and by the opportunities which that intimacy has afforded me of remarking her conduct and sentiments on many different occasions, some of which were rather of a delicate nature, so that in fact I have seen more of her during the few weeks we have been together, than I could have done after a much longer acquaintance, shackled by the common forms of ordinary life. You will not expect from me a description of her person,—for which I refer you to my brother, as also for a fuller account of all the circumstances attending the business than can be comprised in the compass of a letter. Without flying into raptures, for I must assure you that my judgment as well as my affections are consulted upon this occasion; without flying into raptures then, I may safely assure you, that her temper is sweet and cheerful, her understanding good, and what I know will give you pleasure, her principles of religion very serious. I have been very explicit with her upon the nature of my expectations, and she thinks she can accommodate herself to the situation which I should wish her to hold in society as my wife, which, you will easily comprehend, I mean should neither be extravagant nor degrading. Her fortune, though partly dependent upon her brother, who is high in office at Madras, is very considerable—at present £500 a-year. This, however, we must, in some degree, regard as precarious,—I mean to the full extent; and indeed when you know her you will not be surprised that I regard this circumstance chiefly because it removes those prudential considerations which would otherwise render our union impossible for the present. Betwixt her income and my own professional exertions, I have little doubt we will be enabled to hold the rank in society which my family and situation entitle me to fill.

"My dear mother, I cannot express to you the anxiety I have that you will not think me flighty nor inconsiderate in this business. Believe me, that experience, in one instance—you cannot fail to know to what I allude—is too recent to permit my being so hasty in my conclusions as the warmth of my temper might have otherwise prompted. I am also most anxious that you should be prepared to show her kindness, which I know the goodness of your own heart will prompt, more especially when I tell you that she is an orphan, without relations, and almost without friends. Her guardian is, I should say *was*, for she is of age, Lord Downshire, to whom I must write for his consent, a piece of respect to which he is entitled for his care of her,—and there the matter rests at present. I think I need not tell you if I assume the new character which I threaten, I shall be happy to find that in that capacity, I may make myself more useful to my brothers, and especially to Anne, than I could in any other. On the other hand, I shall certainly expect that my friends will endeavour to show every attention in their power to a woman who forsakes for me, prospects much more splendid than what I can offer, and who comes into Scotland without a single friend but myself. I find I could write a great deal more upon this subject, but as it is late, and as I must write to my father, I shall restrain myself. I think (but you are best judge) that in the circumstances which I stand, you should write to her, Miss Carpenter, under cover to me at Carlisle.

"Write to me very fully upon this important subject—send me your opinion, your advice, and above all, your blessing; you will see the necessity of not delaying a minute in doing so, and in keeping this business *strictly private*, till you hear farther from me, since you are not ignorant that even at this advanced period, an objection on the part of Lord Downshire, or many other accidents, may intervene; in which case, I should little wish my disappointment to be public.

"Believe me, my dear mother,
ever your dutiful and affectionate son,
WALTER SCOTT."

Scott remained in Cumberland until the Jedburgh assizes recalled him to his legal duties. On arriving in that town, he immediately sent for his friend Shortreed, whose *memorandum* records that the evening of the 30th September, 1797, was one of the most joyous he ever spent. "Scott" (he says) "was *sair* beside himself about Miss Carpenter—we toasted her twenty times over—and sat together, he raving about her, until it was one in the morning." He soon returned to Cumberland; and the following letters will throw light on the character and conduct of the parties, and on the nature of the difficulties which were presented by the prudence and prejudices of the young advocate's family connexions. It appears that, at one stage of the business, Scott had seriously contemplated leaving the bar at Edinburgh, and establishing himself with his bride (I know not in what capacity) in one of the colonies.

To Walter Scott, Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh.

"Carlisle, October 4, 1797.

"It is only an hour since I received Lord Downshire's letter. You will say, I hope, that I am indeed very good to write so soon, but I almost fear that all my goodness can never carry me through all this plaguy writing. Lord Downshire will be happy to hear from you. He is the very best man on earth—his letter is kind and affectionate, and full of advice, much in the style of *your last*. I am to consult *most carefully my heart*. Do you believe I did not do it when I gave you my consent? It is true, I don't like to reflect on that subject. I am afraid. It is very awful to think it is for life. How can I ever laugh after such tremendous thoughts? I believe never more. I am hurt to find that your friends don't think the match a prudent one. If it is not agreeable to them all, you must then forget me, for I have too much pride to think of connecting myself in a family were I not equal to them. Pray, my dear sir, write to Lord D. immediately—explain yourself to him as you would to me, and he will, I am sure, do all he can to serve us. If you really love me, you must love him, and write to him as you would to a friend.

"A dieu,—au plaisir de vous revoir bientôt. C. C."

To Robert Shortreed, Esq., Sheriff-Substitute, Jedburgh.

"Selkirk, 8th October, 1797.

"Dear Bob,

"This day a long train of anxieties was put an end to by a letter from Lord Downshire, couched in the most flattering terms, giving his consent to my marriage with his ward. I am thus far on my way to Carlisle—only for a visit—because, betwixt her reluctance to an immediate marriage, and the imminent approach of the session, I am afraid I shall be thrown back to the Christmas holidays. I shall be home in about eight days. Ever yours, sincerely,

W. SCOTT."

To Miss Christian Rutherford, Ashestiel, by Selkirk.

"Has it never happened to you, my dear Miss Christy, in the course of your domestic economy, to meet with a drawer stuffed so very, so *extremely* full, that it was very difficult to pull it open, however desirous you might be to exhibit its contents? In case this miraculous event has ever taken place, you may somewhat conceive from thence the cause of my silence, which has really proceeded from my having a very great deal to communicate; so much so, that I really hardly know how to begin. As for my affection and friendship for you, believe me, sincerely, they neither slumber nor sleep, and it is only your suspicions of their drowsiness which incline me to write at this period of a business highly interesting to me, rather than when I could have done so with something like certainty—Hem! Hem! It must come out at once—I am in a very fair way of being married to a very amiable young woman, with whom I formed an attachment in the course of my tour. She was born in France—her parents were of English extraction—the name Carpenter. She was left an orphan early in life, and educated in England, and is at present under the care of a Miss Nicolson, a daughter of the late Dean of Exeter, who was on a visit to her relations in Cumberland. Miss Carpenter is of age, but as she lies under great obligations to the Marquis of Downshire, who was her guardian, she cannot take a step of such importance without his consent—and I daily expect his final answer upon the subject. Her fortune is dependent, in a great measure, upon an only and very affectionate brother. He is Commercial Resident at Salem in India, and has settled upon her an annuity of £500. Of her personal accomplishments I shall only say, that she possesses very good sense, with uncommon good temper, which I have seen put to most severe trials. I must bespeak your kindness and friendship for her. You may easily believe I shall rest very much both upon Miss R. and you for giving her the *carte de pays*, when she comes to Edinburgh. I may give you a hint that there is no *romance* in her composition—and that, though born in France, she has the sentiments and manners of an Englishwoman, and does not like to be thought otherwise. A very slight tinge in her pronunciation is all which marks the foreigner. She is at present at Carlisle, where I shall join her as soon as our arrangements are finally made. Some difficulties have occurred in settling matters with my father, owing to certain prepossessions which you can easily conceive his adopting. One main article was the uncertainty of her provision, which has been in part removed by the safe arrival of her remittances for this year, with assurances of their being regular and even larger in future, her brother's situation being extremely lucrative. Another objection was her birth; 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' but as it was *birth merely and solely*, this has been abandoned. *You* will be more interested about other points regarding her, and I can only say that—though our acquaintance was shorter than ever I could have thought of forming such a connexion upon—it was exceedingly close, and gave me full opportunities for observation—and if I had parted with her, it must have been for ever, which both parties began to think would be a disagreeable thing. She has conducted herself through the whole business with so much propriety as to make a strong impression in her favour upon the minds of my father and mother, prejudiced as they were against her, from the circumstances I have mentioned. We shall be your neighbours in the New Town, and intend to live very quietly; Charlotte will need many lessons from Miss R. in housewifery. Pray show this letter to Miss R. with my very best compliments. Nothing can now stand in the way except Lord Downshire, who may not think the match a prudent one for Miss C.—but he will surely think her entitled to judge for herself at her age, in what she would wish to place her happiness. She is not a beauty, by any means, but her person and face are very engaging. She is a brunette—her manners are lively, but when necessary, she can be very serious. She was baptized and educated a Protestant of the Church of England. I think I have now said enough upon this subject. Do not write till you hear from me again, which will be when all is settled. I wish this important event may hasten your return to town. I send a goblin story, with best compliments to the misses, and ever am, yours affectionately,

Walter Scott.

"THE ERL-KING.

(*The Erl-King is a goblin that haunts the Black Forest in Thuringia.—To be read by a candle particularly long in the snuff.*)

O, who rides by night thro' the woodland so wild?
It is the fond father embracing his child;
And close the boy nestles within his loved arm,
To hold himself fast, and to keep himself warm.

'O, father, see yonder! see yonder!' he says;
'My boy, upon what dost thou fearfully gaze?'—
'O, 'tis the Erl-King with his crown and his shroud.'—
'No, my son, it is but a dark wreath of the cloud.'

(*The Erl-King speaks.*)
'O, come and go with me, thou loveliest child,
By many a gay sport shall thy time be beguiled;
My mother keeps for thee full many a fair toy,
And many a fine flower shall she pluck for my boy.'

'O father, my father, and did you not hear
The Erl-King whisper so low in my ear?'—
'Be still, my heart's darling, my child, be at ease,
It was but the wild blast as it sung thro' the trees.'

Erl-King.
'O wilt thou go with me, thou loveliest boy?
My daughter shall tend thee with care and with joy;
She shall bear thee so lightly thro' wet and thro' wild,
And press thee, and kiss thee, and sing to my child.'

'O father, my father, and saw you not plain,
The Erl-King's pale daughter glide past thro' the rain?'—
'O yes, my loved treasure, I knew it full soon,
It was the grey willow that danced to the moon.'

Erl-King.
'Oh come and go with me, no longer delay,
Or else, silly child, I will drag thee away.'—
'Oh father! Oh father! now, now keep your hold,
The Erl-King has seized me—his grasp is so cold!'

Sore trembled the father, he spurr'd thro' the wild,
Clasping close to his bosom his shuddering child;
He reaches his dwelling in doubt and in dread,
But, clasp'd to his bosom, the infant was *dead!*"—

"You see I have not altogether lost the faculty of rhyming. I assure you there is no small impudence in attempting a version of that ballad, as it has been translated by *Lewis*.—All good things be with you.

W. S."

To Walter Scott, Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh.

"London, October 15, 1797.

"Sir,

"I received your letter with pleasure, instead of considering it as an intrusion. One thing more being fully stated would have made it perfectly satisfactory, namely, the sort of income you immediately possess, and the sort of maintenance Miss Carpenter, in case of your demise, might reasonably expect. Though she is of an age to judge for herself in the choice of an object that she would like to run the race of life with, she has referred the subject to me. As her friend and guardian, I in duty must try to secure her happiness, by endeavouring to keep her comfortable immediately, and to prevent her being left destitute, in case of any unhappy contingency. Her good sense and good education are her chief fortune; therefore, in the worldly way of talking, she is not entitled to much. Her brother, who was also left under my care at an early period, is excessively fond of her; he has no person to think of but her as yet; and will certainly be enabled to make her very handsome presents, as he is doing very well in India, where I sent him some years ago, and where he bears a very high character, I am happy to say. I do not throw out this to induce you to make any proposal beyond what prudence and discretion recommend; but I hope I shall hear from you by return of post, as I may be shortly called out of town to some distance. As children are in general the consequence of an happy union, I should wish to know what may be your thoughts or wishes upon that subject. I trust you will not think me too particular; indeed I am sure you will not, when you consider that I am endeavouring to secure the happiness and welfare of an estimable young woman whom you admire and profess to be partial and attached to, and for whom I have the highest regard, esteem, and respect. I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

DOWNSHIRE."

To the Same.

Carlisle, Oct. 22.

"Your last letter, my dear sir, contains a very fine train of *perhaps*, and of so many pretty conjectures, that it is not flattering you to say you excel in the art of tormenting yourself. As it happens, you are quite wrong in your suppositions. I have been waiting for Lord D.'s answer to your letter, to give a full answer to your very proper enquiries about my family. Miss Nicolson says, that when she did offer to give you some information, you refused it—and advises me *now* to wait for Lord D.'s letter. Don't believe I have been idle; I have been writing very long letters to him, and all about you. How can you think that I will give an answer about the house until I hear from London?—that is quite impossible; and I believe you are a little out of your senses to imagine I can be in Edinburgh before the twelfth of next month. O, my dear sir, no—you must not think of it this *great while*. I am much flattered by your mother's remembrance; present my respectful compliments to her. You don't mention your father in your last *anxious* letter—I hope he is better. I am expecting every day to hear from my brother. You may tell your uncle he is commercial resident at Salem. He will find the name of Charles C. in his India list. My compliments to Captain Scott. *Sans adieu*,

C. C."

To the Same.

"Carlisle, Oct. 25.

"Indeed, Mr. Scott, I am by no means pleased with all this writing. I have told you how much I dislike it, and yet you still persist in asking me to write, and that by return of post. O, you really are quite out of your senses. I should not have indulged you in that whim of yours, had you not given me that hint that my silence gives an air of mystery. I have no reason that can detain me in acquainting you that my father and mother were French, of the name of Charpentier; he had a place under government; their residence was at Lyons, where you would find on enquiries that they lived in good repute and in *very good style*. I had the misfortune of losing my father before I could know the value of such a parent. At his death we were left to the care of Lord D., who was his very great friend, and very soon after I had the affliction of losing my mother. Our taking the name of Carpenter was on my brother's going to India, to prevent any little difficulties that might have occurred. I hope now you are pleased. Lord D. could have given every information, as he has been acquainted with all my family. You say you almost love *him*, but until your *almost* comes to a *quite*, I cannot love *you*. Before

I conclude this famous epistle, I will give you a little hint—that is, not to put so many *must* in your letters—it is beginning *rather too soon;* and another thing is, that I take the liberty not to mind them much, but I expect you mind me. You *must* take care of yourself; you *must* think of me, and believe me yours sincerely,

C. C."

To the Same.

"Carlisle, Oct. 26.

"I have only a minute before the post goes, to assure you, my dear sir, of the welcome reception of the stranger.* The very great likeness to a friend of mine will endear him to me; he shall be my constant companion, but I wish he could give me an answer to a thousand questions I have to make—one in particular, what reason have you for so many fears you express? Have your friends changed? Pray let me know the truth—they perhaps don't like me *being French.* Do write immediately—let it be in better spirits. Et croyez-moi toujours votre sincere.

C. C."

To the Same

"October 31st.

". . . . All your apprehensions about your friends make me very uneasy. At your father's age prejudices are not easily overcome—old people have, you know, so much more wisdom and experience, that we must be guided by them. If he has an objection on my being *French,* I excuse him with all my heart, as I don't love them myself. O how all these things plague me—when will it end? And to complete the matter, you talk of going to the West Indies. I am certain your father and uncle say you are a hot *heady* young man, quite mad, and I assure you I join with them; and I must believe, that, when you have such an idea, you have then determined to think no more of me. I begin to repent of having accepted your picture. I will send it *back again,* if you ever think again about the West Indies. Your family then would *love me* very much—to forsake them for a *stranger,* a person who does not possess half the charms and good qualities that you *imagine.* I think I hear your uncle calling you a hot heady young man. I am certain of it, and I am *generally right* in my conjectures. What does your sister say about it? I suspect that she thinks on the matter as I should do, with fears and anxieties for the happiness of her brother. If it be proper, and you think it would be *acceptable,* present my best compliments to your mother: and to my old acquaintance Captain Scott I beg to be remembered. This evening is the first ball—don't you wish to be of our party? I guess your answer—it would give me infinite pleasure. En attendant le plaisir de vous revoir, je suis toujours votre constante

CHARLOTTE."

To the Same.

"The Castle, Hartford, October 29, 1797.

"Sir,

"I received the favour of your letter. It was so manly, honourable, candid, and so full of good sense, that I think Miss Carpenter's friends cannot in any way object to the union you propose. Its taking place, when or where, will depend upon herself, as I shall write to her by this night's post. Any provision that may be given to her by her brother, you will have settled upon her and her children; and I hope, with all my heart, that every earthly happiness may attend you both. I shall be always happy to hear it, and to subscribe myself your faithful friend and obedient humble servant,

DOWNSHIRE."

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* A miniature of Scott.

(*On the same sheet.*)

Carlisle, Nov. 4.

"Last night I received the enclosed for you from Lord Downshire. If it has your approbation, I shall be very glad to see you as soon as will be convenient. I have a thousand things to tell you; but let me beg of you not to think for some time of a house. I am sure I can convince you of the propriety and prudence of waiting until your father will settle things more to your satisfaction, and until I have heard from my brother. You *must* be of my way of thinking.—Adieu.

C. C."

Scott obeyed this summons, and I suppose remained in Carlisle until the Court of Session met, which is always on the 12th of November.

To W. Scott, Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh.

"Carlisle, Nov. 14th.

"Your letter never could have come in a more favourable moment. Any thing you could have said would have been well received. You surprise me much at the regret you express you had of leaving Carlisle. Indeed, I can't believe it was on my account, I was so uncommonly stupid. I don't know what could be the matter with me, I was so very low, and felt really ill: it was even a trouble to speak. The settling of our little plans—all looked so much in earnest—that I began reflecting more seriously than I generally do, or *approve of*. I don't think that very thoughtful people ever can be happy. As this is my maxim, adieu to all thoughts. I have made a determination of being pleased with every thing, and with every body in Edinburgh; a wise system for happiness, is it not? I enclose the lock. I have had almost all my hair cut off. Miss Nicolson has taken some, which she sends to London to be made to something, but this you are not to know of, as she intends to present it to you. * * * * I am happy to hear of your father's being better pleased as to money matters; it will come at last; don't let that trifle disturb you. Adieu, Monsieur, j'ai l'honneur d'être votre très humble et très

Obeissante

C. C."

"Carlisle, Nov. 27th.

"You have made me very *triste* all day. Pray never more complain of being poor. Are you not ten times richer than I am? Depend on yourself and your profession. I have no doubt you will rise very high, and be a *great rich man*, but we should look down to be contented with our lot, and banish all disagreeable thoughts. We shall do very well. I am very sorry to hear you have such a *bad head*. I hope I shall nurse away all your aches. I think you write too much. When I am *mistress* I shall not allow it. How very angry I should be with you if you were to part with *Lenore*. Do you really believe I should think it an *unnecessary expense* where your health and pleasure can be concerned? I have a better opinion of you, and I am very glad you don't give up the cavalry, as I love any thing that is *stylish*. Don't forget to find a stand for the old carriage, as I shall like to keep it, in case we should have to go any journey; it is so much more convenient than the post chaises, and will do very well till we can keep *our carriage*. What an idea of yours was that to mention where you wish to have your *bones laid!* If you were married, I should think you were tired of me. A very pretty compliment *before marriage*. I hope sincerely that I shall not live to see that day. If you always have those cheerful thoughts, how very pleasant and gay you must be.

"Adieu, my dearest friend, take care of yourself if you love me, as I have *no wish* that you should *visit* that *beautiful* and *romantic* scene, the burying-place. Adieu, once more, and believe that you are loved very sincerely by

C. C."

"Dec. 10th.

"If I could but really believe that my letter gave you only half the pleasure you express, I should almost think, my dearest Scott, that I should get very fond of writing merely for the pleasure to *indulge* you—that is saying a great deal. I hope you are sensible of the compliment I pay you, and don't expect I shall *always* be so pretty behaved. You may depend on me, my dearest friend, for fixing as *early* a day as I possibly can; and if it happens to be not quite so soon as you wish, you must not be angry with me. It is very unlucky you are such a bad housekeeper—as I am no better. I shall try. I hope to have very soon the pleasure of seeing you, and to tell you how much I love you; but I wish the first fortnight was over. With all my love, and those sort of pretty things—adieu.

CHARLOTTE.

"P. S. *Etudiez votre Français*. Remember you are to teach me Italian in return, but I shall be but a stupid scholar. *Aimez Charlotte.*"

"Carlisle, Dec. 14th.

***** "I heard last night from my friends in London, and I shall certainly have the deed this week. I will send it to you directly; but not to lose so much time, as you have been reckoning, I will prevent any little delay that might happen by the post, by fixing already next Wednesday for your coming here, and on Thursday the 21st, Oh, my dear Scott—on that day I shall be yours for ever.

C. C.

"*P. S.*—Arrange it so that we shall see none of your family the night of our arrival. I shall be so tired, and such a fright, I should not be seen to advantage."

To these extracts I may add the following from the first leaf of an old black-letter Bible at Abbotsford:—

"*Secundum morem majorum hæc de familiâ Gualteri Scott, Jurisconsulti Edinensis, in librum hunc sacrum manu suâ conscripta sunt.*

"*Gualterus Scott, filius Gualteri Scott et Annæ Rutherford, natus erat apud Edinam* 15*mo die Augusti, A. D.* 1771.

"*Socius Facultatis Juridicæ Edinensis receptus erat* 11*mo die Julii, A. D.* 1792.

"*In ecclesiam Sanctæ Mariæ apud Carlisle, uxorem duxit Margaretam Charlottam Carpenter, filiam quondam Joannis Charpentier et Charlottæ Volere, Lugdunensem,* 24*to die Decembris,* 1797."

CHAPTER IX.

EARLY MARRIED LIFE—LASSWADE COTTAGE—MONK LEWIS—TRANSLATION OF GOETZ VON BERLICHINGEN, PUBLISHED—VISIT TO LONDON—HOUSE OF ASPEN—DEATH OF SCOTT'S FATHER—FIRST ORIGINAL BALLADS—GLENFINLAS, &c.—UNPUBLISHED FRAGMENTS—APPOINTMENT TO THE SHERIFFSHIP OF SELKIRKSHIRE.—1798-1799.

SCOTT carried his bride to a lodging in George Street, Edinburgh; a house which he had taken in South Castle Street not being quite prepared for her reception. The first fortnight, to which she had looked with such anxiety, was, I believe, more than sufficient to convince her husband's family that, however rashly he had formed the connexion, she had the sterling qualities of a good wife. Notwithstanding the little leaning to the pomps and vanities of the world, which her letters have not concealed, she had made up her mind to find her happiness in better things; and so long as their circumstances continued narrow, no woman could have conformed herself to them with more of good feeling and good sense. Some habits, new in the quiet domestic circles of Edinburgh citizens, did not escape criticism; and in particular, I have heard herself, in her most prosperous days, laugh heartily at the remonstrances of her George Street landlady, when it was discovered that the *southron* lodger chose to sit usually, and not on high occasions merely, in her drawing-room,—on which subject the mother-in-law was disposed to take the thrifty old-fashioned dame's side.

I cannot fancy that Lady Scott's manners or ideas could ever have amalgamated very well with those of her husband's parents; but the feeble state of the old gentleman's health prevented her from seeing them constantly; and without any affectation of strict intimacy, they soon were, and always continued to be, very good friends. Anne Scott, the delicate sister to whom the Ashestiel Memoir alludes so tenderly, speedily formed a warm and sincere attachment for the stranger; but death, in a short time, carried off that interesting creature, who seems to have had much of her brother's imaginative and romantic temperament, without his power of controlling it.

Mrs. Scott's arrival was welcomed with unmingled delight by the brothers of *the Mountain.* The two ladies who had formerly given life and grace to their society were both recently married. We have seen Miss Erskine's letter of farewell; and I have before me another not less affectionate, written when Miss Cranstoun gave her hand (a few months later) to Godfrey Wenceslaus, Count of Purgstall, a nobleman of large possessions in Styria, who had been spending some time in Edinburgh. Scott's house in South Castle Street,—(soon after exchanged for one of the same sort in North Castle Street, which he purchased, and inhabited down to 1826) became now to *the Mountain* what Cranstoun's and Erskine's had been while their accomplished sisters remained with them. The officers of the Light-Horse, too, established a club among themselves, supping once a week at each other's houses in rotation. The young lady thus found two somewhat different, but both highly agreeable, circles ready to receive her with cordial kindness; and the evening hours passed in a round of innocent gaïety, all the arrangements being conducted in a simple and inexpensive fashion suitable to young persons whose days were mostly laborious, and very few of their purses heavy. Scott and Erskine had always been fond of the theatre; the pretty bride was passionately so—and I doubt if they ever spent a week in Edinburgh without indulging themselves in this amusement. But regular dinners and crowded assemblies were in those years quite unthought of. Perhaps nowhere could have been found a society on so small a scale including more of vigorous intellect, varied information, elegant tastes, and real virtue, affection, and mutual confidence. How often have I heard its members, in the midst of the wealth and honours which most of them in due season attained, sigh over the recollection of those humbler days, when love and ambition were young and buoyant—and no difference of opinion was able to bring even a momentary chill over the warmth of friendship!

"You will imagine," writes the Countess Purgstall to Scott, from one of her Styrian castles, "how my heart burnt within me, my dear, dear friend, while I read your thrice welcome letter. Had all the gods and goddesses, from Saturn to La Liberté, laid their heads together, they could not have presented me with any thing that so accorded with my fondest wishes. To have a conviction that those I love are happy, and don't forget me—I have no way to express my feelings—they come in a flood and destroy me. Could my George but light on another Charlotte, there would be but one crook left in my lot—to wit, that Reggersburg does not serve as a vista for the Parliament Square.* Would some earthquake engulf the vile tract between, or the spirit of our rock introduce me to Jack the Giant-Queller's shoemaker; Lord, Lord, how delightful! Could I choose, I should just for the present patronise the shoemaker, and then the moment I got you all snug in this old hall, steal the shoes and lock them away till the indignation of the Lord passes by poor Old England! Earl Walter would play the devil with me, but his Charlotte's smiles would speak thanks ineffable, and the angry clouds pass as before the sun in his strength. How divinely your spectre scenes would come in here! Surely there is no vanity in saying that earth has no mountains like ours. O, how delightful to see the lady that is blessed with Earl Walter's love, and that had mind enough to discover the blessing. Some kind post, I hope, will soon tell me that your happiness is enlarged, in the only way that it can be enlarged, for you have no chance now I think of taking Buonaparte prisoner. What sort of a genius will he be is a very anxious speculation indeed; whether the philosopher, the lawyer, the antiquary, the poet, or the hero will prevail—the spirit whispers unto me a happy *melange* of the two last—he will lisp in numbers and kick at *la Nourrice*. On his arrival present my fondest wishes to his honour, and don't pray, give him a name out of your list of round-table knights, but some simple Christian appellation from the House of Harden. And is it then true, my God, that Earl Walter is a Benedick, and that I am in Styria? Well, bless us all, prays the separated from her brethren.

J. A. P.'

"Hainfeld, July 20, 1798."

Another extract from the *Family Bible* may close this letter—"M. C. Scott puerum edidit 18to die Octobris 1778, qui postero die obiit apud Edinam."

In the summer of this year Scott had hired a pretty cottage at Lasswade, on the Esk, about six miles from Edinburgh, and there, as the back of Madame de P.'s letter shows, he received it from the hands of Professor Stewart. It is a small house, but with one room of good dimensions, which Mrs. Scott's taste set off to advantage at very humble cost—a paddock or two—and a garden (commanding a most beautiful view) in which Scott delighted to train his flowers and creepers. Never, I have heard him say, was he prouder of his handywork than when he had completed the fashioning of a rustic archway, now overgrown with hoary ivy, by way of ornament to the entrance from the Edinburgh road. In this retreat they spent some happy summers, receiving the visits of their few chosen friends from the neighbouring city, and wandering at will among some of the most romantic scenery that Scotland can boast—Scott's dearest haunt in the days of his boyish ramblings. They had neighbours, too, who were not slow to cultivate their acquaintance. With the Clerks of Pennycuick, with Mackenzie, the Man of Feeling, who then occupied the charming villa of Auchendinny, and with Lord Woodhouselee, Scott had from an earlier date been familiar; and it was while at Lasswade that he formed intimacies, even more important in their results, with the noble families of Melville and Buccleuch, both of whom have castles in the same valley.

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* The ancient castle of Reggersburg (if engravings may be trusted, one of the most magnificent in Germany) was the chief seat of the Purgstalls. In situation and extent it seems to resemble the castle of Stirling. The Countess writes thus, about the same time, to another of *the Mountain*:—"As for Scott and his sweet little wife, I consider them as a sort of papa and mamma to you all, and am happy the gods have ordered it so."

"Sweet are the paths, O passing sweet,
  By Esk's fair streams that run,
O'er airy steep, thro' copsewood deep
  Impervious to the sun;

"From that fair dome where suit is paid
  By blast of bugle free,*
To Auchendinny's hazel shade,
  And haunted Woodhouselee.

"Who knows not Melville's beechy grove,
  And Roslin's rocky glen;
Dalkeith, which all the virtues love,
  And classic Hawthornden?"

Another verse reminds us that

"There the rapt poet's step may rove;"

and it was amidst these delicious solitudes that he did produce the pieces which laid the imperishable foundations of all his fame. It was here that when his warm heart was beating with young and happy love, and his whole mind and spirit were nerved by new motives for exertion; it was here, that in the ripened glow of manhood he seems to have first felt something of his real strength, and poured himself out in those splendid original ballads which were at once to fix his name.

I must, however, approach these more leisurely. When William Erskine was in London in the spring of this year, he happened to meet in society with Matthew Gregory Lewis, M.P. for Hindon, whose romance of "The Monk," with the ballads which it included, had made for him, in those barren days, a brilliant reputation. This good-natured fopling, the pet and plaything of certain fashionable circles, was then busy with that miscellany which at length came out in 1801, under the name of "Tales of Wonder," and was beating up in all quarters for contributions. Erskine showed Lewis Scott's version of "Lenore" and the "Wild Huntsman;" and when he mentioned that his friend had other specimens of the German *diablerie* in his portfolio, the collector anxiously requested that Scott might be enlisted in his cause. The brushwood splendour of "The Monk's" fame,

"The false and foolish fire that's whiskt about
By popular air, and glares, and then goes out,"†

had a dazzling influence among the unknown aspirants of Edinburgh; and Scott, who was perhaps at all times rather disposed to hold popular favour as the surest test of literary merit, and who certainly continued through life to over-estimate all talents except his own, considered this invitation as a very flattering compliment. He immediately wrote to Lewis, placing whatever pieces he had translated and imitated from the German "*Volkslieder*" at his disposal. The following is the first of Lewis's letters to him that has been preserved—it is without date, but marked by Scott "1798."

To Walter Scott, Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh.

"Sir,

"I cannot delay expressing to you how much I feel obliged to you, both for the permission to publish the ballads I requested, and for the handsome manner in which that permission was granted. The plan I have proposed to myself, is to collect all the *marvellous* ballads which I can lay hands upon. Ancient as well as modern will be comprised in my design; and I shall even allow a place to Sir Gawaine's Foul Ladye, and the Ghost that came to Margaret's door and tirled at the pin. But as a ghost or a witch is a *sine qua non* ingredient in all the dishes of which I mean to compose my hobgoblin repast, I am afraid the 'Lied von Treue' does not come within the plan. With regard to the romance in 'Claudina von Villa Bella,' if I am not mistaken, it is only a fragment in the original; but, should you have finished it, you will oblige me much by letting me have a copy of it, as well as the other *marvellous* traditionary ballads you were so good as to offer me.

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* Pennycuick.

† Oldham.

"Should you be in Edinburgh when I arrive there, I shall request Erskine to contrive an opportunity for my returning my personal thanks. Mean while I beg you to believe me your most obedient and obliged

M. G. Lewis."

When Lewis reached Edinburgh he met Scott accordingly, and the latter told Allan Cunningham, thirty years afterwards, that he thought he had never felt such elation as when the "Monk" invited him to dine with him for the first time at his hotel. Since he gazed on Burns in his seventeenth year, he had seen no one enjoying, by general consent, the fame of a poet; and Lewis, whatever Scott might, on maturer consideration, think of his title to such fame, had certainly done him no small service; for the ballads of "Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogine," and "Durandarte," had rekindled effectually in his breast the spark of poetical ambition. Lady Charlotte Campbell (now Bury), always distinguished by her passion for elegant letters, was ready, "in pride of rank, in beauty's bloom," to do the honours of Scotland to the "Lion of Mayfair:" and I believe Scott's first introduction to Lewis took place at one of her Ladyship's parties. But they met frequently, and, among other places, at Dalkeith—as witness one of Scott's marginal notes, written in 1825, on Lord Byron's Diary.—"Poor fellow," says Byron, "he died a martyr to his new riches—of a second visit to Jamaica.

"I'd give the lands of Deloraine
Dark Musgrave were alive again;"

that is,

"I would give many a sugar-cane
Monk Lewis were alive again."

To which Scott adds:—"I would pay my share! how few friends one has whose faults are only ridiculous. His visit was one of humanity to ameliorate the condition of his slaves. He did much good by stealth, and was a most generous creature .... Lewis was fonder of great people than he ought to have been, either as a man of talent or as a man of fashion. He had always dukes and duchesses in his mouth, and was pathetically fond of any one that had a title. You would have sworn he had been a *parvenu* of yesterday, yet he had lived all his life in good society .... Mat had queerish eyes—they projected like those of some insects, and were flattish on the orbit. His person was extremely small and boyish—he was indeed the least man I ever saw, to be strictly well and neatly made. I remember a picture of him by Saunders being handed round at Dalkeith House. The artist had ingeniously flung a dark folding-mantle around the form, under which was half-hid a dagger, a dark lantern, or some cut-throat appurtenance: with all this the features were preserved and ennobled. It passed from hand to hand into that of Henry, Duke of Buccleuch, who, hearing the general voice affirm that it was very like, said aloud, 'Like Mat Lewis! Why that picture's like A MAN!' He looked, and lo, Mat Lewis's head was at his elbow. This boyishness went through life with him. He was a child, and a spoiled child, but a child of high imagination; and so he wasted himself on ghost-stories and German romances. He had the finest ear for rhythm I ever met with—finer than Byron's."

During Lewis's stay in Scotland this year, he spent a day or two with Scott at Musselburgh, where the yeomanry corps were in quarters. Scott received him in his lodgings, under the roof of an ancient dame, who afforded him much amusement by her daily colloquies with the fishwomen—the *Mucklebackets* of the place. His delight in studying the dialect of these people is well remembered by the survivors of the cavalry, and must have astonished the stranger dandy. While walking about before dinner on one of these days, Mr. Skene's recitation of the German *Greigslied*, "Der Abschied's Tag ist da" (the day of departure is come), delighted both Lewis and Scott; and the latter produced next morning that spirited little piece in the same measure, which, embodying the volunteer ardour of the time, was forthwith adopted as the troop-song of the Edinburgh Light-Horse.

In January, 1799, Mr. Lewis appears negotiating with a bookseller, named Bell, for the publication of Scott's version of Goethé's Tragedy, "Goetz von Berlichingen of the Iron Hand." Bell seems finally to have purchased the copyright for twenty-five guineas, and twenty-five more to be paid in case of a second edition—which was never called for until long after the copyright had expired. Lewis writes, "I have made him distinctly understand, that, if you accept so small a sum, it will be only because this is your first publication." The edition of "Lenore" and the "Yäger," in 1796, had been completely forgotten; and Lewis thought of those ballads exactly as if they had been MS. contributions to his own "Tales of Wonder," still lingering on the threshold of the press. The *Goetz* appeared accordingly, with Scott's name on the title-page, in the following February.

In March, 1799, he carried his wife to London, this being the first time that he had seen the metropolis since the days of his infancy. The acquaintance of Lewis served to introduce him to some literary and fashionable society, with which he was much amused; but his great anxiety was to examine the antiquities of the Tower and Westminster Abbey, and to make some researches among the MSS. of the British Museum. He found his Goetz spoken of favourably, on the whole, by the critics of the time; but it does not appear to have attracted the general attention. The truth is, that, to have given Goethe any thing like a fair chance with the English public, his first drama ought to have been translated at least ten years before. The imitators had been more fortunate than the master, and this work, which constitutes one of the most important landmarks in the history of German literature, had not come even into Scott's hands, until he had familiarized himself with the ideas which it first opened, in the feeble and puny mimicries of writers already forgotten. He readily discovered the vast gulf which separated Goethe from the German dramatists on whom he had heretofore been employing himself; but the public in general drew no such distinctions, and the English Goetz was soon afterwards condemned to oblivion through the unsparing ridicule showered on whatever bore the name of *German play*, by the inimitable caricature of the Rovers.

The tragedy of Goethe, however, has in truth nothing in common with the wild absurdities against which Canning and Ellis had levelled the arrows of their wit. It is a broad, bold, free, and most picturesque delineation of real characters, manners, and events; the first fruits, in a word, of that passionate admiration for Shakspeare, to which all that is excellent in the recent imaginative literature of Germany must be traced. With what delight must Scott have found the scope and manner of our Elizabethan drama revived on a foreign stage at the call of a real master! with what double delight must he have seen Goethe seizing for the noblest purposes of art, men and modes of life, scenes, incidents, and transactions, all claiming near kindred with those that had from boyhood formed the chosen theme of his own sympathy and reflection! In the baronial robbers of the Rhine, stern, bloody, and rapacious, but frank, generous, and after their fashion, courteous; in their forays upon each other's domains, the besieged castles, the plundered herds, the captive knights, the browbeaten bishop, and the baffled liege-lord, who vainly strove to quell all these turbulences, Scott had before him a vivid image of the life of his own and the rival Border clans, familiarized to him by a hundred nameless minstrels. If it be doubtful whether, but for "Percy's Reliques," he would ever have thought of editing their ballads, I think it not less so whether, but for the iron-handed Goetz, it would ever have flashed upon his mind, that in the wild traditions which these recorded, he had been unconsciously assembling materials for more works of high art than the longest life could serve him to elaborate.

As the version of the Goetz has at length been included in Scott's poetical works, I need not make it the subject of more detailed observation here. The reader who turns to it for the first time will be no less struck than I was under similar circumstances a dozen years ago, with the many points of resemblance between the tone and spirit of Goethe's delineation, and that afterwards adopted by the translator in some of the most remarkable of his original works. One example, however, may be forgiven.

"*A loud alarm, with shouts and firing*—SELBISS *is borne in wounded, by two Troopers.*

Selbiss. Leave me here, and hasten to Goetz.

1st Trooper. Let us stay—you need our aid.

Sel. Get one of you on the watch-tower, and tell me how it goes.

1st Troop. How shall I get up?

2d Troop. Get upon my shoulder; you can then reach the ruined part.

1st Troop. (*On the tower.*) Alas! Alas!

Sel. What seest thou?

Troop. Your cavaliers fly to the hill.

Sel. Hellish cowards! I would that they stood, and that I had a ball through my head! Ride one of you at full speed—Curse and thunder them back to the field! See'st thou Goetz?

Troop. I see the three black feathers in the midst of the tumult.

Sel. Swim, brave swimmer—I lie here.

Troop. A white plume! Whose is that?

Sel. The Captain.
Troop. Goetz gallops upon him—Crash—down he goes.
Sel. The Captain?
Troop. Yes.
Sel. Bravo!—bravo!
Troop. Alas! Alas! I see Goetz no more.
Sel. Then die, Selbiss.
Troop. A dreadful tumult where he stood. George's blue plume vanishes too.
Sel. Climb higher—See'st thou Lerse?
Troop. No—every thing is in confusion.
Sel. No further—come down—tell me no more.
Troop. I cannot—bravo! I see Goetz.
Sel. On horseback?
Troop. Ay, ay—high on horseback—victory!—they fly!
Sel. The Imperialists?
Troop. Standard and all—Goetz behind them—he has it—he has it!"

• The first hint of this (as of what not in poetry?) may be found in the Iliad—where Helen points out the persons of the Greek heroes in the fight raging below, to old Priam seated on the walls of Troy; and Shakspeare makes some use of the same idea in his Julius Cæsar. But who does not recognise in Goethe's drama the true original of the death-scene of Marmion, and the storm in Ivanhoe?

Scott executed about the same time his "House of Aspen," rather a *rifacimento* than a translation from one of the minor dramatists that had crowded to partake the popularity of Goetz of the Ironhand. It also was sent to Lewis in London, where having first been read and much recommended by the celebrated actress, Mrs. Easton, it was taken up by Kemble, and I believe actually put in rehearsal for the stage. If so, the trial did not encourage further preparation, and the notion was abandoned. Discovering the play thirty years after among his papers, Scott sent it to one of the literary almanacks (the Keepsake of 1829). In the advertisement, he says "he had lately chanced to look over these scenes with feelings very different from those of the adventurous period of his literary life during which they were written, and yet with such, perhaps, as a reformed libertine might regard the illegitimate production of an early amour." He adds, "there is something to be ashamed of certainly; but after all, paternal vanity whispers that the child has some resemblance to the father." This piece being also now included in the general edition of his works, I shall not dwell upon it here. It owes its most effective scenes to the *Secret Tribunal*, which fountain of terror had first been disclosed by Goethe, and had by this time lost much of its effect through the "clumsy alacrity" of a hundred followers. Scott's scenes are interspersed with some lyrics, the numbers of which, at least, are worthy of attention. One has the metre—and not a little of the spirit, of the boat-song of Roderick Dhu and Clan Alpin.

"Joy to the victors, the sons of old Aspen,
Joy to the race of the battle and scar;
Glory's proud garland triumphantly grasping,
Generous in peace and victorious in war.
        Honour acquiring,
        Valour inspiring,
Bursting resistless through foemen they go,
        War-axes wielding,
        Broken ranks yielding,
Till from the battle proud Roderick retiring,
Yields in wild rout the fair palm to his foe."

Another is the first draft of "the Maid of Toro;" and perhaps he had forgotten the more perfect copy of that song when he sent the original to the Keepsake.

I incline to believe that the "House of Aspen" was written after Scott's return from London; but it has been mentioned in the same page with the "Goetz," to avoid any recurrence to either the German or the Germanized dramas. His return was accelerated by the domestic calamity which forms the subject of the following letter:—

To Mrs. Scott, George's Square, Edinburgh.

"London, 19th April, 1799.

"My dear Mother,

"I cannot express the feelings with which I sit down to the discharge of my present melancholy duty, nor how much I regret the accident which has removed me from Edinburgh, at a time, of all others, when I should have wished to administer to your distress all the consolation which sympathy and affection could have afforded. Your own principles of virtue and religion will, however, I well know, be your best support in this heaviest of human afflictions. The removal of my regretted parent from this earthly scene, is to him, doubtless, the happiest change, if the firmest integrity and the best-spent life can entitle us to judge of the state of our departed friends. When we reflect upon this we ought almost to suppress the selfish feelings of regret that he was not spared to us a little longer, especially when we consider that it was not the will of Heaven that he should share the most inestimable of its earthly blessings, such a portion of health as might have enabled him to enjoy his family. To my dear father, then, the putting off this mortal mask was happiness, and to us who remain, a lesson so to live that we also may have hope in our latter end; and with you, my dearest Mother, remain many blessings and some duties, a grateful recollection of which will, I am sure, contribute to calm the current of your affliction. The affection and attention which you have a right to expect from your children, and which I consider as the best tribute we can pay to the memory of the parent we have lost, will also, I am sure, contribute its full share to the alleviation of your distress. The situation of Charlotte's health, in its present delicate state, prevented me from setting off directly for Scotland, when I heard that immediate danger was apprehended. I am now glad I did not do so, as I could not with the utmost expedition have reached Edinburgh before the lamented event had taken place. The situation of my affairs must detain me here for a few days more; the instant I can I will set out for Scotland. I need not tell you not even to attempt to answer this letter—such an exertion would be both unnecessary and improper. John or Tom will let me know how my sister and you do. I am, ever, dear Mother, your dutiful and affectionate son,

W. S."

"P. S.—Permit me, my dear Madam, to add a line to Scott's letter, to express to you how sincerely I feel for your loss, and how much I regret that I am not near you to try by the most tender care to soften the pain that so great a misfortune must inflict on you, and on all those who had the happiness of being connected with him. I hope soon to have the pleasure of returning to you, and to convince you of the sincere affection of your daughter,

M. C. S."

The death of this worthy man, in his 70th year, after a long series of feeble health and suffering, was an event which could only be regarded as a great deliverance to himself. He had had a succession of paralytic attacks, under which mind as well as body had by degrees been laid quite prostrate. When the first Chronicles of the Canongate appeared, a near relation of the family said to me—"I had been out of Scotland for some time, and did not know of my good friend's illness, until I reached Edinburgh, a few months before his death. Walter carried me to visit him, and warned me that I should see a great change. I saw the very scene that is here painted of the elder Croftangry's sick-room—not a feature different—poor Anne Scott, the gentlest of creatures, was treated by the fretful patient precisely like this scene."*

I have lived to see the curtain rise and fall once more on a like scene.

Mr. Thomas Scott continued to manage his father's business. He married early; he was in his circle of society extremely popular; and his prospects seemed fair in all things. The property left by the old gentleman was less than had been expected, but sufficient to make ample provision for his widow, and a not inconsiderable addition to the resources of those among whom the remainder was divided.

Scott's mother and sister, both much exhausted with their attendance on a protracted sick-bed, and the latter already in the first stage of the malady which in two years more carried her also to her grave, spent the greater part of the following summer and autumn in his cottage at Lasswade.

There he was now again labouring assiduously in the service of Lewis's "hobgoblin repast," and the specimens of his friend's letters on his contributions, as they were successively forwarded to London, which were printed by way of appendix to his Essay on Popular Poetry, in 1830, may perhaps be sufficient for the reader's curiosity. The versons from Bürger were, in consequence of Lewis's remarks, somewhat corrected; and, indeed, although Scott speaks of himself as having paid no attention, "*at the time,*" to the lectures of his "martinet in rhymes and numbers"—("lectures which were," he adds, "severe enough, but useful eventually," as "forcing on a young and careless versifier criticisms absolutely necessary to his future success")—it is certain that his memory had in some degree deceived him when he used this language, for, of all the false rhymes and Scotticisms which Lewis had pointed out in these "lectures," hardly one appears in the printed copies of the ballads contributed by Scott to the Tales of Wonder.

As to his imperfect *rhymes* of this period, I have no doubt he owed them to his recent zeal about collecting the ballads of the Border. He had, in his familiarity with compositions so remarkable for merits of a higher order, ceased to be offended, as in the days of his devotion to Langhorne and Meikle he would probably have been, with their loose and vague assonances, which are often, in fact, not rhymes at all; a license pardonable enough in real minstrelsy, meant to be chanted to moss-troopers with the accompanying tones of the war-pipe, but certainly not worthy of imitation in verses written for the eye of a polished age. Of this carelessness as to rhyme, we see little or nothing in our few specimens of his boyish verse; and it does not occur, to any extent that has ever been thought worth notice, in his great works.

But Lewis's collection did not engross the leisure of this summer. It produced also what Scott justly calls his "first serious attempts in verse;" and of these the earliest appears to have been the Glenfinlas.

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* See Chronicles, Waverley Novels, vol. xli. p. 13.

Here the scene is laid in the most favourite district of his favourite Perthshire Highlands; and the Gælic tradition on which it is founded was far more likely to draw out the secret strength of his genius, as well as to arrest the feelings of his countrymen, than any subject with which the stories of German *diablerie* could have supplied him. It has been alleged, however, that the poet makes a German use of his Scottish materials; that the legend, as briefly told in the simple prose of his preface, is more *affecting* than the lofty and sonorous stanzas themselves; that the vague terror of the original dream loses, instead of gaining, by the expanded elaboration of the detail. There may be something in these objections: but no man can pretend to be an impartial critic of the piece which first awoke his own childish ear to the power of poetry and the melody of verse.

The next of these compositions was, I believe, the Eve of St. John, in which Scott repeoples the tower of Smailholm, the awe-inspiring haunt of his infancy; and here he touches, for the first time, the one superstition which can still be appealed to with full and perfect effect; the only one which lingers in minds long since weaned from all sympathy with the machinery of witches and goblins. And surely this mystery was never touched with more thrilling skill than in that noble ballad. It is the first of his original pieces, too, in which he uses the measure of his own favourite Minstrels; a measure which the monotony of mediocrity had long and successfully been labouring to degrade, but in itself adequate to the expression of the highest thoughts as well as the gentlest emotions, and capable, in fit hands, of as rich a variety of music as any other of modern times. This was written at Mertoun-house in the autumn of 1799. Some dilapidations had taken place in the tower of Smailholm, and Harden, being informed of the fact, and entreated with needless earnestness by his kinsman to arrest the hand of the spoiler, requested playfully a ballad, of which Smailholm should be the scene, as the price of his assent. The stanza in which the groves of Mertoun are alluded to, has been quoted in a preceding page.

Then came The Grey Brother, founded on another superstition, which seems to have been almost as ancient as the belief in ghosts; namely, that the holy service of the altar cannot go on in the presence of an unclean person—a heinous sinner unconfessed and unabsolved. The fragmentary form of this poem greatly heightens the awfulness of its impression; and in construction and metre, the verses which really belong to the story appear to me the happiest that have ever been produced expressly in imitation of the ballad of the middle age. In the stanzas, previously quoted, on the scenery of the Esk, however beautiful in themselves, and however interesting now as marking the locality of the composition, he must be allowed to have lapsed into another strain, and produced a *pannus purpureus* which interferes with and mars the general texture.

He wrote at the same period the fine chivalrous ballad, entitled The Fire-King, in which there is more than enough to make us forgive the machinery. It was also in the course of this autumn that he first visited Bothwell Castle, the seat of Archibald Lord Douglas, who had married the Lady Frances Scott, sister to Henry, Duke of Buccleuch; a woman whose many amiable virtues were combined with extraordinary strength of mind, and who had, from the first introduction to the young poet at Dalkeith, formed high anticipations of his future career. Lady Douglas was one of his dearest friends through life; and now, under her roof, he met with one whose abilities and accomplishments not less qualified her to estimate him, and who still survives to lament the only event that could have interrupted their cordial confidence—the Lady Louisa Stewart, daughter of the celebrated John, Earl of Bute. These ladies, who were sisters in mind, feeling, and affection, he visited among scenes the noblest and most interesting that all Scotland can show—alike famous in history and romance; and he was not unwilling to make Bothwell and Blantyre the subject of another ballad. His purpose was never completed. I think, however, the reader will not complain of my introducing the fragment which I have found among his papers.

"When fruitful Clydesdale's apple-bowers
Are mellowing in the noon;
When sighs round Pembroke's ruin'd towers
The sultry breath of June;

"When Clyde, despite his sheltering wood,
Must leave his channel dry;
And vainly o'er the limpid flood
The angler guides his fly;

"If, chance, by Bothwell's lovely braes
A wanderer thou hast been,
Or hid thee from the summer's blaze
In Blantyre's bowers of green,

"Full where the copsewood opens wild
Thy pilgrim step hath staid
Where Bothwell's towers in ruin piled,
O'erlook the verdant glade;

"And many a tale of love and fear
Hath mingled with the scene—
Of Bothwell's banks that bloom'd so dear,
And Bothwell's bonny Jean.

"O, if with rugged minstrel lays
Unsated be thy year,
And thou of deeds of other days
Another tale wilt hear,

"Then all beneath the spreading beech
Flung careless on the lea,
The Gothic muse the tale shall teach
Of Bothwell's sisters three.

"Wight Wallace stood on Deckmont head,
He blew his bugle round,
Till the wild bull in Cadyow wood
Has started at the sound.

"St. George's cross, o'er Bothwell hung,
Was waving far and wide,
And from the lofty turret flung
Its crimson blaze on Clyde;

"And rising at the bugle blast
  That mark'd the Scottish foe,
Old England's yeomen muster'd fast,
  And bent the Norman bow.

"Tall in the midst Sir Aylmer rose,
  Proud Pembroke's Earl was he—
While"—— . . . .

One morning, during his visit to Bothwell, was spent on an excursion to the ruins of Graignethan Castle, the seat, in former days, of the great Evandale branch of the house of Hamilton, but now the property of Lord Douglas; and the poet expressed such rapture with the scenery, that his host urged him to accept, for his lifetime, the use of a small habitable house, enclosed within the circuit of the ancient walls. This offer was not at once declined; but circumstances occurred before the end of the year, which rendered it impossible for him to establish his country residence in Lanarkshire. The castle of Craignethan is the original of his "Tillietudlem."

Another imperfect ballad, in which he had meant to blend together two legends familiar to every reader of Scottish history and romance, has been found in the same portfolio, and the handwriting proves it to be of the same early date. Though long and very unfinished, it contains so many touches of his best manner that I cannot withhold

THE SHEPHERD'S TALE.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

And ne'er but once, my son, he says,
  Was yon sad cavern trod,
In persecution's iron days,
  When the land was left by God.

From Bewlie bog, with slaughter red,
  A wanderer hither drew,
And oft he stopt and turned his head,
  As by fits the night-wind blew;

For trampling round by Cheviot edge
  Were heard the troopers keen,
And frequent from the Whitelaw ridge
  The death-shot flashed between.

The moonbeams through the misty shower
  On yon dark cavern fell;
Through the cloudy night the snow gleamed white,
  Which sunbeam ne'er could quell.

"Yon cavern dark is rough and rude,
  And cold its jaws of snow;
But more rough and rude are the men of blood,
  That hunt my life below;

"Yon spell-bound dell, as the aged tell,
  Was hewn by demons' hands;
But I had lourd[*] melle with the fiends of hell,
  Than with Clavers and his band."

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[*] *Lourd;* i. e. liefer—rather.

He heard the deep-mouthed bloodhound bark,
He heard the horses neigh,
He plunged him in the cavern dark,
And downward sped his way.

Now faintly down the winding path
Came the cry of the faulting hound,
And the muttered oath of baulked wrath
Was lost in hollow sound.

He threw him on the flinted floor,
And held his breath for fear;
He rose and bitter cursed his foes,
As the sounds died on his ear.

"O bare thine arm, thou battling Lord,
For Scotland's wandering band;
Dash from the oppressor's grasp the sword,
And sweep him from the land!

"Forget not thou thy people's groans
From dark Dunnotter's tower,
Mix'd with the sea-fowl's shrilly moans,
And ocean's bursting roar!

"O in fell Clavers' hour of pride,
Even in his mightiest day,
As bold he strides through conquest's tide,
O stretch him on the clay!

"His widow and his little ones,
O may their tower of trust
Remove its strong foundation stones,
And crush them in the dust!"

"Sweet prayers to me," a voice replied,
"Thrice welcome, guest of mine!"
And glimmering on the cavern side,
A light was seen to shine.

An aged man in amice brown,
Stood by the wanderer's side,
By powerful charm, a dead man's arm
The torch's light supplied.

From each stiff finger stretched upright,
Arose a ghastly flame,
That waved not in the blast of night
Which through the cavern came.

O deadly blue was that taper's hue,
That flamed the cavern o'er,
But more deadly blue was the ghastly hue
Of his eyes who the taper bore.

He laid on his head a hand like lead,
As heavy, pale, and cold:—
"Vengeance be thine, thou guest of mine,
If thy heart be firm and bold.

"But if faint thy heart, and caitiff fear
Thy recreant sinews know,
The mountain erne thy heart shall tear,
Thy nerves the hooded crow."

The wanderer raised him undismay'd:
"My soul by dangers steeled,
Is stubborn as my border blade,
Which never knew to yield.

"And if thy power can speed the hour
Of vengeance on my foes,
Theirs be the fate, from bridge and gate
To feed the hooded crows."

The Brownie looked him in the face,
And his colour fled with speed—
"I fear me," quoth he, "uneath it will be
To match thy word and deed.

"In ancient days when English bands
Sore ravaged Scotland fair,
The sword and shield of Scottish land
Was valiant Halbert Kerr.

"A warlock loved the warrior well,
Sir Michael Scott by name,
And he sought for his sake a spell to make,
Should the Southern foemen tame;

"Look thou," he said, "from Cessford head,
As the July sun sinks low,
And when glimmering white on Cheviot's height
Thou shalt spy a wreath of snow,

The spell is complete which shall bring to thy feet,
The haughty Saxon foe.
"For many a year wrought the wizard here,
In Cheviot's bosom low,

Till the spell was complete, and in July's heat
Appeared December's snow;
But Cessford's Halbert never came
The wondrous cause to know.

"For years before in Bowden aisle
The warrior's bones had lain,
And after short while, by female guile,
Sir Michael Scott was slain.

"But me and my brethren in this cell
His mighty charms retain,—
And he that can quell the powerful spell
Shall o'er broad Scotland reign."

He led him through an iron door,
And up a winding stair,
And in wild amaze did the wanderer gaze
On the sight which opened there.

Through the gloomy night flashed ruddy light,—
A thousand torches' glow;
The cave rose high, like the vaulted sky,
O'er stalls in double row.

In every stall of that endless hall
Stood a steed in barbing bright;
At the foot of each steed, all around save the head,
Lay stretched a stalwart knight.

In each mailed hand was a naked brand,
  As they lay on the black bull's hide;
Each visage stern did upwards turn,
  With eyeballs fixed and wide.

A launcegay strong, full twelve ells long,
  By every warrior hung;
At each pommel there, for battle yare,
  A Jedwood axe was slung.

The casque hung near each cavalier;
  The plumes waved mournfully
At every tread which the wanderer made
  Through the hall of Gramarye;

The ruddy beam of the torches' gleam,
  That glared the warriors on,
Reflected light from armour bright,
  In noontide splendour shone.

And onward seen in lustre sheen,
  Still lengthening on the sight,
Through the boundless hall stood steeds in stall,
  And by each lay a sable knight.

Still as the dead lay each horseman dread,
  And moved nor limb nor tongue;
Each steed stood stiff as an earthfast cliff,
  Nor hoof nor bridle rung.

No sounds through all the spacious hall
  The deadly still divide,
Save where echoes aloof from the vaulted roof
  To the wanderer's step replied.

At length before his wondering eyes,
  On an iron column borne,
Of antique shape, and giant size,
  Appear'd a sword and horn.

"Now choose thee here," quoth his leader,
  "Thy venturous fortune try;
Thy woe and weal, thy boot and bale,
  In yon brand and bugle lie."

To the fatal brand he mounted his hand,
  But his soul did quiver and quail;
The life-blood did start to his shuddering heart,
  And left him wan and pale.

The brand he forsook, and the horn he took
  To 'say a gentle sound;
But so wild a blast from the bugle brast,
  That the Cheviot rock'd around.

From Forth to Tees, from seas to seas,
  The awful bugle rung;
On Carlisle wall, and Berwick withal,
  To arms the warders sprung.

With clank and clang the cavern rang,
  The steeds did stamp and neigh;
And loud was the yell as each warrior fell
  Storte up with hoop and cry.

"Woe, woe," they cried, "thou caitiff coward,
That ever thou wert born!
Why drew ye not the knightly sword
Before ye blew the horn?"

The morning on the mountain shone,
And on the bloody ground,
Hurled from the cave with shiver'd bone,
The mangled wretch was found.

And still beneath the cavern dread,
Among the gliders grey,
A shapeless stone with lichens spread
Marks where the wanderer lay.'

* * * * * * * * * *

The reader may be interested by comparing with this ballad the author's prose version of part of its legend, as given in one of the last works of his pen. He says, in the Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, 1830:—"Thomas of Ercildowne, during his retirement, has been supposed, from time to time, to be levying forces to take the field in some crisis of his country's fate. The story has often been told, of a daring horse-jockey having sold a black horse to a man of venerable and antique appearance, who appointed the remarkable hillock upon Eildon hills, called the Luchen-hare, as the place where, at twelve o'clock at night, he should receive the price. He came, his money was paid in ancient coin, and he was invited by his customer to view his residence. The trader in horses followed his guide in the deepest astonishment through several long ranges of stalls, in each of which a horse stood motionless, while an armed warrior lay equally still at the charger's feet. 'All these men,' said the wizard in a whisper, 'will awaken at the battle of Sheriffmuir.' At the extremity of this extraordinary depôt hung a sword and a horn, which the prophet pointed out to the horse-dealer as containing the means of dissolving the spell. The man in confusion took the horn and attempted to wind it. The horses instantly started in their stalls, stamped, and shook their bridles, the men arose and clashed their armour, and the mortal, terrified at the tumult he had excited, dropped the horn from his hand. A voice like that of a giant, louder even than the tumult around, pronounced these words:—

'Woe to the coward that ever he was born,
That did not draw the sword before he blew the horn.'

A whirlwind expelled the horse-dealer from the cavern, the entrance to which he never could again find. A moral might be perhaps extracted from the legend, namely, that it is best to be armed against danger before bidding it defiance."

One more fragment, in another style, and I shall have exhausted this budget. I am well aware that the introduction of such things will be considered by many as of questionable propriety; but on the whole, it appears to me the better course to omit nothing by which it is in my power to throw light on this experimental period.

* * * * *

"Go sit old Cheviot's crest below,
And pensive mark the lingering snow
In all his scaurs abide,

And slow dissolving from the hill
In many a sightless soundless rill,
Feed sparkling Bowmont's tide.

"Fair shines the stream by bank and lea,
As wimpling to the eastern sea
She seeks Till's sullen bed,
Indenting deep the fatal plain,
Where Scotland's noblest, brave in vain,
Around their monarch bled.

"And westward hills on hills you see,
Even as old Ocean's mightiest sea
Heaves high her waves of foam,
Dark and snow-ridged from Cutsfield's wold
To the proud foot of Cheviot roll'd,
Earth's mountain billows come."

* * * * *

Notwithstanding all these varied essays, and the charms of the distinguished society into which his reputation had already introduced him, Scott's friends do not appear to have as yet entertained the slightest notion that literature was to be the main business of his life. A letter of Kerr of Abbotrule congratulates him on his having had more to do at the autumnal assizes of Jedburgh this year than on any former occasion, which intelligence he seems himself to have communicated with no feeble expressions of satisfaction. "I greatly enjoy this," says Kerr; "go on; and with your strong sense and hourly ripening knowledge, that you must rise to the top of the tree in the Parliament House in due season, I hold as certain as that Murray died Lord Mansfield. But don't let many an Ovid,* or rather many a Burns (which is better), be lost in you. I rather think men of business have produced as good poetry in their by-hours as the professed regulars; and I don't see any sufficient reason why a Lord President Scott should not be a famous poet (in the vacation time), when we have seen a President Montesquieu step so nobly beyond the trammels in the *Esprit des Loix.* I suspect Dryden would have been a happier man had he had your profession. The reasoning talents visible in his verses, assure me that he would have ruled in Westminster Hall as easily as he did at Button's, and he might have found time enough besides for every thing that one really honours his memory for." This friend appears to have entertained, in October, 1799, the very opinion as to the *profession of literature* on which Scott acted through life.

Having again given a week to Liddesdale, in company with Mr. Shortreed, he spent a few days at Rosebank, and was preparing to return to Edinburgh for the winter, when James Ballantyne called on him one morning, and begged him to supply a few paragraphs on some legal question of the day for his newspaper. Scott complied; and carrying his article himself to the printing-office, took with him also some of his recent pieces, designed to appear in Lewis's collection. With these, especially, as his Memorandum says, the "Morlachian fragment after Goethe," Ballantyne was charmed, and he expressed his regret that Lewis's book was so long in appearing. Scott talked of Lewis with rapture; and, after reciting some of his stanzas, said,

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* "How many an Ovid was in Murray lost."—POPE.

"I ought to apologize to you for having troubled you with any thing of my own when I had things like this for your ear."—"I felt at once," says Ballantyne, "that his own verses were far above what Lewis could ever do, and though, when I said this, he dissented, yet he seemed pleased with the warmth of my approbation." At parting, Scott threw out a casual observation, that he wondered his old friend did not try to get some little booksellers' work, "to keep his types in play during the rest of the week." Ballantyne answered, that such an idea had not occurred to him—that he had no acquaintance with the Edinburgh "trade;" but, if he had, his types were good, and he thought he could afford to work more cheaply than town-printers. Scott, "with his good-humoured smile," said, "You had better try what you can do. You have been praising my little ballads; suppose you print off a dozen copies or so of as many as will make a pamphlet, sufficient to let my Edinburgh acquaintances judge of your skill for themselves." Ballantyne assented; and I believe exactly twelve copies of William and Ellen, The Fire-King, The Chase, and a few more of those pieces, were thrown off accordingly, with the title (alluding to the long delay of Lewis's collection) of "Apology for Tales of Terror—1799." This first specimen of a press, afterwards so celebrated, pleased Scott; and he said to Ballantyne, "I have been for years collecting old Border ballads, and I think I could, with little trouble, put together such a selection from them as might make a neat little volume, to sell for four or five shillings. I will talk to some of the booksellers about it when I get to Edinburgh, and if the thing goes on, you shall be the printer." Ballantyne highly relished the proposal; and the result of this little experiment changed wholly the course of his worldly fortunes, as well as of his friend's.

Shortly after the commencement of the Winter Session, the office of Sheriff-depute of Selkirkshire became vacant by the death of an early ally of Scott's, Andrew Plummer of Middlestead, a scholar and antiquary, who had entered with zeal into his ballad-researches, and whose name occurs accordingly more than once in the notes to the Border Minstrelsy. Perhaps the community of their tastes may have had some part in suggesting to the Duke of Buccleuch, that Scott might fitly succeed Mr. Plummer in the magistrature. Be that as it might, his Grace's influence was used with the late Lord Melville, who, in those days, had the general control of the crown patronage in Scotland, and his lordship was prepared to look favourably on Scott's pretensions to some office of this description. Though neither the Duke nor this able Minister was at all addicted to literature, they had both seen Scott frequently under their own roofs, and been pleased with his manners and conversation; and he had by this time come to be on terms of affectionate intimacy with some of the younger members of either family. The Earl of Dalkeith (afterwards Duke Charles of Buccleuch), and his brother Lord James Scott (now Lord Montagu), had been participating, with kindred ardour, in the military patriotism of the period, and had been thrown into Scott's society under circumstances well qualified to ripen acquaintance into confidence. The Honourable Robert Dundas, eldest son of the statesman whose title he has inherited, had been one of Scott's companions in the High

School; and he, too, had been of late a lively partaker in the business of the yeomanry cavalry; and, last not least, Scott always remembered with gratitude the strong intercession on this occasion of Lord Melville's nephew, the Right Honourable William Dundas, then Secretary to the Board of Control, and now Lord Clerk Register for Scotland.

His appointment to the *Sheriffship* bears date 16th December, 1799. It secured him an annual salary of £300; an addition to his resources which at once relieved his mind from whatever degree of anxiety he might have felt in considering the prospect of an increasing family, along with the ever precarious chances of a profession, in the daily drudgery of which it is impossible to suppose that he ever could have found much pleasure.[*] The duties of the office were far from heavy; the district, small, peaceful, and pastoral, was in great part the property of the Duke of Buccleuch; and he turned with redoubled zeal to his project of editing the ballads, many of the best of which belonged to this very district of his favourite Border—those "tales," which, as the Dedication of the Minstrelsy expresses it, had "in elder times celebrated the prowess and cheered the halls" of his noble patron's ancestors.

CHAPTER X.

THE BORDER MINSTRELSY IN PREPARATION—RICHARD HEBER—JOHN LEYDEN—WILLIAM LAIDLAW—JAMES HOGG—CORRESPONDENCE WITH GEORGE ELLIS—PUBLICATION OF THE TWO FIRST VOLUMES OF THE BORDER MINSTRELSY.—1800-1802.

JAMES BALLANTYNE, in his *Memorandum*, after mentioning his ready acceptance of Scott's proposal to print the Minstrelsy, adds—"I do not believe, that even at this time, he seriously contemplated giving himself much to literature." I confess, however, that a letter of his, addressed to Ballantyne in the spring of 1800, inclines me to question the accuracy of this impression. After alluding to an intention which he had entertained, in consequence of the delay of Lewis's collection, to *publish* an edition of the ballads contained in his own little volume, entitled "Apology for Tales of Terror," he goes on to detail plans for the future direction of his printer's career, which were, no doubt, primarily suggested by the friendly interest he took in Ballantyne's fortunes; but there are some hints which, considering what afterwards did take place, lead me to suspect that even thus early the writer contemplated the possibility at least of being himself very intimately connected with the result of these airdrawn schemes. The letter is as follows:

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[*] "My profession and I came to stand nearly upon the footing which honest Slender consoled himself on having established with Mistress Anne Page: 'There was no great love between us at the beginning, and it pleased heaven to decrease it on farther acquaintance.'"—*Introduction to the Lay of the Last Minstrel.* 1830.

To Mr. J. Ballantyne, Kelso Mail Office, Kelso.

"Castle Street, 22d April, 1800.

"Dear Sir,

"I have your favour, since the receipt of which some things have occurred which induce me to postpone my intention of publishing my ballads, particularly a letter from a friend, assuring me that 'The Tales of Wonder' are actually in the printer's hand. In this situation I endeavour to strengthen my small stock of patience, which has been nearly exhausted by the delay of this work, to which (though for that reason alone) I almost regret having promised assistance. I am still resolved to have recourse to your press for the Ballads of the Border, which are in some forwardness.

"I have now to request your forgiveness for mentioning a plan which your friend Gillon and I have talked over together with a view as well to the public advantage as to your individual interest. It is nothing short of a migration from Kelso to this place, which I think might be effected upon a prospect of a very flattering nature.

"Three branches of printing are quite open in Edinburgh, all of which I am well convinced you have both the ability and inclination to unite in your person. The first is that of an editor of a newspaper, which shall contain something of an uniform historical deduction of events distinct from the farrago of detached and unconnected plagiarisms from the London paragraphs of 'The Sun.' Perhaps it might be possible (and Gillon has promised to make enquiry about it) to treat with the proprietors of some established paper—suppose the Caledonian Mercury—and we would all struggle to obtain for it some celebrity. To this might be added a 'Monthly Magazine,' and 'Caledonian Annual Register,' if you will; for both of which, with the excellent literary assistance which Edinburgh at present affords, there is a fair opening. The next object would naturally be the execution of Session papers, the best paid work which a printer undertakes, and of which, I dare say, you would soon have a considerable share; for as you make it your business to superintend the proofs yourself, your education and abilities would insure your employers against the gross and provoking blunders which the poor composers are often obliged to submit to. The publication of works, either ancient or modern, opens a third fair field for ambition. The only gentleman who attempts any thing in that way is in very bad health; nor can I, at any rate, compliment either the accuracy or the execution of his press. I believe it is well understood, that with equal attention an Edinburgh press would have superior advantages even to those of the metropolis; and though I would not advise launching into that line at once, yet it would be easy to feel your way by occupying your press in this manner on vacant days only.

"It appears to me that such a plan, judiciously adopted and diligently pursued, opens a fair road to an ample fortune. In the meanwhile, the 'Kelso Mail' might be so arranged as to be still a source of some advantage to you; and I dare say, if wanted, pecuniary assistance might be procured to assist you at the outset, either upon terms of a share or otherwise; but I refer you for particulars to Joseph, in whose room I am now assuming the pen, for reasons too distressing to be declared, but at which you will readily guess. I hope, at all events, you will impute my interference to any thing rather than an impertinent intermeddling with your concerns on the part of, dear sir, your obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

The Joseph Gillon here named was a Writer to the Signet of some eminence; a man of strong abilities and genuine wit and humour, for whom Scott, as well as Ballantyne, had a warm regard.* The intemperate habits alluded to at the close of Scott's letter gradually undermined his business, his health, and his character; and he was glad, on leaving Edinburgh, which became quite necessary some years afterwards, to obtain the situation of a doorkeeper in the House of Lords —in which he died. The answer of Ballantyne has not been preserved.

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* Calling on him one day in his writing office, Scott said, "Why, Joseph, this place is as hot as an oven." "Well," quoth Gillon, "and isn't it here that I make my bread?"

To return to the "Minstrelsy."—Scott found able assistants in the completion of his design. Richard Heber (long Member of Parliament for the University of Oxford) happened to spend this winter in Edinburgh, and was welcomed, as his talents and accomplishments entitled him to be, by the cultivated society of the place. With Scott his multifarious learning, particularly his profound knowledge of the literary monuments of the middle ages, soon drew him into habits of close alliance; the stores of his library, even then extensive, were freely laid open, and his own oral commentaries were not less valuable. But through him Scott made acquaintance with a person still more qualified to give him effectual aid in this undertaking; a native of the Border—from infancy, like himself, an enthusiastic lover of its legends, and who had already saturated his mind with every species of lore that could throw light upon these relics.

Few who read these pages can be unacquainted with the leading facts in the history of John Leyden.—Few can need to be reminded that this extraordinary man, born in a shepherd's cottage in one of the wildest valleys of Roxburghshire, and of course almost entirely self-educated, had, before he attained his nineteenth year, confounded the doctors of Edinburgh by the portentous mass of his acquisitions in almost every department of learning. He had set the extremest penury at utter defiance, or rather he had never been conscious that it could operate as a bar; for bread and water, and access to books and lectures, comprised all within the bound of his wishes; and thus he toiled and battled at the gates of science after science, until his unconquerable perseverance carried every thing before it; and yet, with this monastic abstemiousness and iron hardness of will, perplexing those about him by manners and habits in which it was hard to say whether the moss-trooper or the schoolman of former days most prevailed, he was at heart a poet.

Archibald Constable, in after life one of the most eminent of British publishers, was at this period the keeper of a small book-shop, into which few, but the poor students of Leyden's order, had hitherto found their way. Heber, in the course of his bibliomaniacal prowlings, discovered that it contained some of

"The small old volumes, dark with tarnish'd gold,"

which were already the Delilahs of his imagination; and, moreover, that the young bookseller had himself a strong taste for such charmers. Frequenting the place accordingly, he observed with some curiosity the barbarous aspect and gestures of another daily visitant, who came not to purchase evidently, but to pore over the more recondite articles of the collection—often balanced for hours on a ladder with a folio in his hand, like Dominie Sampson. The English virtuoso was on the look-out for any books or MSS. that might be of use to the editor of the projected "Minstrelsy," and some casual colloquy led to the discovery that this unshorn stranger was, amidst the endless labyrinth of his lore, a master of legend and tradition—an enthusiastic collector and most skilful expounder of these very Border ballads in particular. Scott heard with much interest Heber's account of his odd acquaintance, and found, when introduced, the person whose initials, affixed to a series of pieces in verse, chiefly translations from Greek, Latin, and the northern languages, scattered, during the last three or four years, over the pages of the "Edinburgh Magazine," had often much excited his curiosity, as various indications pointed out the Scotch Border for the native district of this unknown "J. L."

These new friendships led to a great change in Leyden's position, purposes, and prospects. He was presently received into the best society of Edinburgh, where his strange, wild uncouthness of demeanour does not seem to have at all interfered with the general appreciation of his genius, his gigantic endowments, and really amiable virtues. Fixing his ambition on the East, where he hoped to rival the achievements of Sir William Jones, he at length, about the beginning of 1802, obtained the promise of some literary appointment in the East India Company's service; but when the time drew near, it was discovered that the patronage of the season had been exhausted, with the exception of one *surgeon assistant's* commission—which had been with difficulty secured for him by Mr. William Dundas; who, moreover, was obliged to inform him that, if he accepted it, he must be qualified to pass his medical trials within six months. This news, which would have crushed any other man's hopes to the dust, was only a welcome fillip to the ardour of Leyden. He that same hour grappled with a new science, in full confidence that whatever ordinary men could do in three or four years, his energy could accomplish in as many months; took his degree accordingly in the beginning of 1803, having just before published his beautiful poem, the "Scenes of Infancy;" sailed to India; raised for himself, within seven short years, the reputation of the most marvellous of Orientalists; and died, in the midst of the proudest hopes, at the same age with Burns and Byron, in 1811.

But to return:—Leyden was enlisted by Scott in the service of Lewis, and immediately contributed a ballad, called The Elf-King, to the Tales of Terror. Those highly spirited pieces, The Cout of Keildar, Lord Soulis, and The Mermaid, were furnished for the original department of Scott's own collection; and the Dissertation on Fairies, prefixed to its second volume, "although arranged and digested by the editor, abounds with instances of such curious reading as Leyden only had read, and was originally compiled by him;" but not the least of his labours was in the collection of the old ballads themselves. When he first conversed with Ballantyne on the subject of the proposed work, and the printer signified his belief that a single volume of moderate size would be sufficient for the materials, Leyden exclaimed, "Dash it, does Mr. Scott mean another thin thing like Goetz of Berlichingen? I have more than that in my head myself: we shall turn out three or four such volumes at least." He went to work stoutly in the realization of these wider views. "In this labour," says Scott, "he was equally interested by friendship for the editor, and by his own patriotic zeal for the honour of the Scottish borders; and both may be judged of from the following circumstance. An interesting fragment had been obtained of an ancient historical ballad; but the remainder, to the great disturbance of the editor and his coadjutor, was not to be recovered. Two days afterwards, while the editor was sitting with some company after dinner, a sound was heard at a distance like that of the whistling of a tempest through the torn rigging of the vessel which scuds before it. The sounds increased as they approached more near; and Leyden (to the great astonishment of such of the guests as did not know him) burst into the room, chanting the desiderated ballad with the most enthusiastic gesture, and all the energy of what he used to call the *saw-tones* of his voice. It turned out that he had walked between forty and fifty miles and back again, for the sole purpose of visiting an old person who possessed this precious remnant of antiquity.[*]

Various allusions to the progress of Leyden's fortunes will occur in letters to be quoted hereafter. I may refer the reader, for further particulars, to the biographical sketch by Scott from which the preceding anecdote is taken. Many tributes to his memory are scattered over his friend's other works, both prose and verse; and, above all, Scott did not forget him when exploring, three years after his death, the scenery of his "Mermaid;"—

"Scarba's isle, whose tortured shore
Still rings to Corrievrekan's roar,
And lonely Colonsay;—
Scenes sung by him who sings no more:
His bright and brief career is o'er,
And mute his tuneful strains;
Quench'd is his lamp of varied lore,
That loved the light of song to pour;
A distant and a deadly shore
Has Leyden's cold remains!"[†]

During the years 1800 and 1801, the Minstrelsy formed its editor's chief occupation—a labour of love truly, if ever such there was; but neither this nor his sheriffship interfered with his regular attendance at the bar, the abandonment of which was all this while as far as it ever had been from his imagination, or that of any of his friends. He continued to have his summer head-quarters at Lasswade; and Mr. (now Sir John) Stoddart, who visited him there in the course of his Scottish tour,[‡] dwells on "the simple unostentatious elegance of the cottage, and the domestic picture which he there contemplated—a man of native kindness and cultivated talent, passing the intervals of a learned profession amidst scenes highly favourable to his poetic inspirations, not in churlish and rustic solitude, but in the daily exercise of the most precious sympathies as a husband, a father, and a friend." His means of hospitality were now much enlarged, and the cottage, on a Saturday and Sunday at least, was seldom without visitors.

Among other indications of greater ease in his circumstances, which I find in his letter-book, he writes to Heber, after his return to London in May, 1800, to request his good offices on behalf of Mrs. Scott, who had "set her heart on a phæton, at once strong, and low, and handsome, and not to cost more than thirty guineas;" which combination of advantages Heber seems to have found by no means easy of attainment. The phæton was, however, discovered; and its springs must soon have been put to a sufficient trial, for this was "the first wheeled carriage that ever penetrated into Liddesdale"—namely, in August, 1800. The friendship of the Buccleuch family now placed better means of research at his disposal, and Lord Dalkeith had taken special care that there should be a band of pioneers in waiting for his orders when he reached Hermitage.

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[*] Essay on the Life of Leyden—Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. iv. p. 165.

[†] Lord of the Isles, Canto iv. st. 11.

[‡] The account of this Tour was published in 1801.

Though he had not given up Lasswade, his sheriffship now made it necessary for him that he should be frequently in Ettrick Forest. On such occasions he took up his lodgings in the little inn at Clovenford, a favourite fishing station on the road from Edinburgh to Selkirk. From this place he could ride to the county town whenever business required his presence, and he was also within a few miles of the vales of Yarrow and Ettrick, where he obtained large accessions to his store of ballads. It was in one of these excursions that, penetrating beyond St. Mary's lake, he found a hospitable reception at the farm of *Blackhouse*, situated on the Douglas-burn, then tenanted by a remarkable family, to which I have already made allusion—that of William Laidlaw. He was then a very young man, but the extent of his acquirements was already as noticeable as the vigour and originality of his mind; and their correspondence, where "Sir" passes, at a few bounds, through "Dear Sir," and "Dear Mr. Laidlaw," to "Dear Willie," shows how speedily this new acquaintance had warmed into a very tender affection. Laidlaw's zeal about the ballads was repaid by Scott's anxious endeavours to get him removed from a sphere for which, he writes, "it is no flattery to say that you are much too good." It was then, and always continued to be, his opinion, that his friend was particularly qualified for entering with advantage on the study of the medical profession; but such designs, if Laidlaw himself ever took them up seriously, were not ultimately persevered in; and I question whether any worldly success could, after all, have overbalanced the retrospect of an honourable life spent happily in the open air of nature, amidst scenes the most captivating to the eye of genius, and in the intimate confidence of, perhaps, the greatest contemporary minds.

James Hogg had spent ten years of his life in the service of Mr. Laidlaw's father, but although his own various accounts of his early days are not to be reconciled with each other as to minute particulars of date and locality, he seems to have passed into that of another sheep-farmer in a neighbouring valley, before Scott first visited Blackhouse. Be that as it may, William Laidlaw and Hogg had been for years the most intimate of friends, and the former took care that Scott should see, without delay, one whose enthusiasm about the minstrelsy of the Forest was equal to his own, and whose mother, then an aged woman, though she lived many years afterwards, was celebrated for having by heart several ballads in a more perfect form than any other inhabitant of the vale of Ettrick. The personal history of James Hogg must have interested Scott even more than any acquisition of that sort which he owed to this acquaintance with, perhaps, the most remarkable man that ever wore the *maud* of a shepherd. But I need not here repeat a tale which his own language will convey to the latest posterity. Under the garb, aspect, and bearing of a rude peasant—and rude enough he was in most of these things, even after no inconsiderable experience of society—Scott found a brother poet, a true son of nature and genius, hardly conscious of his powers. He had taught himself to write by copying the letters of a printed book as he lay watching his flock on the hill-side, and had probably reached the utmost pitch of his ambition when he first found that his artless rhymes could touch the heart of the ewe-milker who partook the shelter of his mantle during the passing storm. As yet his naturally kind and simple character had not been exposed to any of the dangerous flatteries of the world; his heart was pure—his enthusiasm buoyant as that of a happy child; and well as Scott knew that reflection, sagacity, wit, and wisdom were scattered abundantly among the humblest rangers of these pastoral solitudes, there was here a depth and a brightness that filled him with wonder, combined with a quaintness of humour, and a thousand little touches of absurdity, which afforded him more entertainment, as I have often heard him say, than the best comedy that ever set the pit in a roar.

Scott opened in the same year a correspondence with the venerable Bishop of Dromore, who seems, however, to have done little more than express a warm interest in an undertaking so nearly resembling that which will ever keep his own name in remembrance. He had more success in his applications to a more unpromising quarter—namely, with Joseph Ritson, the ancient and virulent assailant of Bishop Percy's editorial character. This narrow-minded, sour, and dogmatical little word-catcher had hated the very name of a Scotsman, and was utterly incapable of sympathising with any of the higher views of his new correspondent. Yet the bland courtesy of Scott disarmed even this half-crazy pedant; and he communicated the stores of his really valuable learning in a manner that seems to have greatly surprised all who had hitherto held any intercourse with him on antiquarian topics. It astonished, above all, the late amiable and elegant George Ellis, whose acquaintance was about the same time opened to Scott through their common friend Heber. Mr. Ellis was now busily engaged in collecting materials for his charming works, entitled Specimens of Ancient English Poetry, and Specimens of Ancient English Romance. The correspondence between him and Scott soon came to be constant. They met personally, not long after the correspondence had commenced, conceived for each other a cordial respect and affection, and continued on a footing of almost brotherly intimacy ever after. To this valuable alliance Scott owed, among other advantages, his early and ready admission to the acquaintance and familiarity of Ellis's bosom friend, his coadjutor in the Antijacobin, and the confidant of all his literary schemes, the late illustrious statesman, Mr. Canning.

The first letter of Scott to Ellis is dated March 27, 1801, and begins thus:—" Sir, as I feel myself highly flattered by your enquiries, I lose no time in answering them to the best of my ability. Your eminence in the literary world, and the warm praises of our mutual friend Heber, had made me long wish for an opportunity of being known to you. I enclose the first sheet of Sir Tristrem, that you may not so much rely upon my opinion as upon that which a specimen of the style and versification may enable your better judgment to form for itself. . . . These pages are transcribed by Leyden, an excellent young man, of uncommon talents, patronised by Heber, and who is of the utmost assistance to my literary undertakings."

As Scott's edition of Sir Tristrem did not appear until May 1804, and he and Leyden were busy with the Border Minstrelsy when his correspondence with Ellis commenced, this early indication of his labours on the former work may require explanation. The truth is, that both Scott and Leyden, having eagerly arrived at the belief, from which neither of them ever permitted himself to falter, that the "Sir Tristrem" of the Auchinleck MS., was virtually, if not literally, the production of Thomas the Rhymer, laird of Ercildoune, in Berwickshire, who flourished at the close of the thirteenth century—the original intention had been to give it, not only a place, but a very prominent one, in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." The doubts and difficulties which Ellis suggested, however, though they did not shake Scott in his opinion as to the parentage of the romance, induced researches which occupied so much time, and gave birth to notes so bulky, that he eventually found it expedient first to pass it over in the two volumes of the Minstrelsy, which appeared in 1802, and then even in the third, which followed a year later; thus reserving Tristrem for a separate publication, which did not take place until after Leyden had sailed for India.

I must not swell these pages by transcribing the entire correspondence of Scott and Ellis, the greater part of which consists of minute antiquarian discussion which could hardly interest the general reader; but I shall give such extracts as seem to throw light on Scott's personal history during this period.

To George Ellis, Esq.

"Lasswade Cottage, 20th April, 1801.

"My dear Sir,

"I should long ago have acknowledged your instructive letter, but I have been wandering about in the wilds of Liddesdale and Ettrick Forest, in search of additional materials for the Border Minstrelsy. I cannot, however, boast much of my success. One of our best reciters has turned religious in his later days, and finds out that old songs are unlawful. If so, then, as Falstaff says, is many an acquaintance of mine damned. I now send you an accurate analysis of Sir Tristrem. Philo-Tomas, whoever he was, must surely have been an Englishman; when his hero joins battle with Moraunt, he exclaims,

'God help Tristrem the Knight,
He fought for Ingland.'

This strain of national attachment would hardly have proceeded from a Scottish author, even though he had laid his scene in the sister country. In other respects the language appears to be Scottish, and certainly contains the essence of Tomas's work. . . . . You shall have Sir Otuel in a week or two, and I shall be happy to compare your Romance of Merlin with our *Arthur and Merlin*, which is a very good poem, and may supply you with some valuable additions. . . . I would very fain lend your elephant[*] *a lift*, but I fear I can be of little use to you. I have been rather an observer of detached feats respecting antiquities, than a regular student. At the same time, I may mention one or two circumstances, were it but to place your elephant upon a tortoise. From Selkirkshire to Cumberland, we have a ditch and bulwark of great strength, called the Catrail, running north and south, and obviously calculated to defend the western side of the island against the inhabitants of the eastern half. Within this bulwark, at Drummelzier, near Peebles, we find the grave of Merlin, the account of whose madness and death you will find in Fordun. The same author says he was seized with his madness during a dreadful battle on the Liddle, which divides Cumberland from Scotland. All this seems to favour your ingenious hypothesis, that the sway of the British Champion [Arthur] extended over Cumberland and Strathcluyd, as well as Wales. Ercildoune is hardly five miles from the Catrail. . . . .

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[*] I believe it was Mr. Canning that had, on some occasion when Ellis talked of his antiquarian hobby-horse, exclaimed, "Hobby, truly! yours is an elephant."

"Leyden has taken up a most absurd resolution to go to Africa on a journey of discovery. Will you have the goodness to beg Heber to write to him seriously on so ridiculous a plan, which can promise nothing either pleasant or profitable. I am certain he would get a church in Scotland with a little patience and prudence, and it gives me great pain to see a valuable young man of uncommon genius and acquirements fairly throw himself away. Yours truly,

Walter Scott."

To the Same.

"Musselburgh, 11th May, 1801.

. . . "I congratulate you upon the health of your elephants—as an additional mouthful of provender for them, pray observe that the tale of Sir Gawain's Foul Ladie, in Percy's Reliques, is originally Scaldic, as you will see in the history of Hrolfe Kraka, edited by Torfæus from the ancient Sagas regarding that prince. I think I could give you some more crumbs of information were I at home; but I am at present discharging the duties of quartermaster to a regiment of volunteer cavalry—an office altogether inconsistent with romance; for where do you read that Sir Tristrem weighed out hay and corn; that Sir Launcelot du Lac distributed billets; or that any Knight of the Round Table condescended to higgle about a truss of straw? Such things were left for our degenerate days, when no warder sounds his horn from the barbican as the *preux chevalier* approaches to claim hospitality. Bugles indeed we have; but it is only to scream us out of bed at five in the morning —hospitality such as the seneschals of Don Quixote's castles were wont to offer him—and all to troopers, to whom, for valour eke and courtesy, Major Sturgeon himself might yield the palm. In the midst of this scene of motley confusion, I long, like the hart for water-brooks, for the arrival of your *grande opus.* The nature of your researches animates me to proceed in mine (though of a much more limited and local nature), even as iron sharpeneth iron. I am in utter despair about some of the hunting terms in 'Sir Tristrem.' There is no copy of Lady Juliana Berners' work in Scotland, and I would move heaven and earth to get a sight of it. But as I fear this is utterly impossible, I must have recourse to your friendly assistance, and communicate a set of doubts and queries, which, if any man in England can satisfy, I am well assured it must be you. You may therefore expect, in a few days, another epistle. Mean time I must invoke the spirit of Nimrod."

"Edinburgh, 10th June, 1801.

"My dear Sir,

"A heavy family misfortune, the loss of an only sister in the prime of life, has prevented, for some time, my proposed communication regarding the hunting terms of 'Sir Tristrem.' I now enclose the passage, accurately copied, with such explanations as occur to myself, subject always to your correction and better judgment. . . . . I have as yet had only a glance of *The Specimens.* Thomson, to whom Heber intrusted them, had left them to follow him from London in a certain trunk, which has never yet arrived. I should have quarrelled with him excessively for making so little allowance for my patience, had it not been that a violent epidemic fever, to which I owe the loss already mentioned, has threatened also to deprive me, in his person, of one of my dearest friends, and the Scottish literary world of one of its most promising members.

"Some prospect seems to open for getting Leyden out to India, under the patronage of Mackintosh, who goes as chief of the intended academical establishment at Calcutta. That he is highly qualified for acting a distinguished part in any literary undertaking will be readily granted; nor do I think Mr. Mackintosh will meet with many half so likely to be useful in the proposed institution. The extent and versatility of his talents would soon raise him to his level, even although he were at first to go out in a subordinate department. If it be in your power to second his supplication, I rely upon Heber's interest with you to induce you to do so."

"Edinburgh, 25th July, 1801.

. . . "I am infinitely obliged to you, indeed, for your interference in behalf of our Leyden, who, I am sure, will do credit to your patronage, and may be of essential service to the proposed mission. What a difference from broiling himself, or getting himself literally broiled, in Africa. 'Que diable vouloit-il faire dans cette galère?' . . . His brother is a fine lad, and is likely to enjoy some advantages which he wanted—I mean by being more easily introduced into society. I have intermitted his transcript of 'Merlin,' and set him to work on 'Otuel,' of which I send a specimen." . . .

"Edinburgh, 7th December, 1801.

. . . . . "My literary amusements have of late been much retarded and interrupted, partly by professional avocations, and partly by removing to a house newly furnished, where it will be some time before I can get my few books put into order, or clear the premises of painters and workmen; not to mention that these worthies do not nowadays proceed upon the plan of Solomon's architects, whose saws and hammers were not heard, but rather upon the more ancient system of the builders of Babel. To augment this confusion, my wife has fixed upon this time as proper to present me with a fine chopping boy, whose pipe, being of the shrillest, is heard amid the storm, like a boatswain's whistle in a gale of wind. These various causes of confusion have also interrupted the labours of young Leyden on your behalf; but he has again resumed the task of transcribing 'Arthour,' of which I once again transmit a part. I have to acknowledge, with the deepest sense of gratitude, the beautiful analysis of Mr. Douce's Fragments, which throws great light upon the romance of Sir Tristrem. In arranging that, I have anticipated your judicious hint, by dividing it into three parts, where the story seems naturally to pause, and prefixing an accurate argument, referring to the stanzas as numbered.

"I am glad that Mrs. Ellis and you have derived any amusement from the House of Aspen. It is a very hurried dramatic sketch; and the fifth act, as you remark, would require a total revisal previous to representation or publication. At one time I certainly thought, with my friends, that it might have ranked well enough by the side of the Castle Spectre, Bluebeard, and the other drum and trumpet exhibitions of the day; but the 'Plays of the Passions'* have put me entirely out of conceit with my Germanized brat; and should I ever again attempt dramatic composition, I would endeavour after the genuine old English model . . . . . . The publication of 'The Complaynt'† is delayed. It is a work of multifarious lore. I am truly anxious about Leyden's Indian journey, which seems to hang fire. Mr. William Dundas was so good as to promise me his interest to get him appointed secretary to the Institution;‡ but whether he has succeeded or not, I have not yet learned. The various kinds of distress under which literary men, I mean such as have no other profession than letters, must labour, in a commercial country, is a great disgrace to society. I own to you I always tremble for the fate of genius when left to its own exertions, which, however powerful, are usually, by some bizarre dispensation of nature, useful to every one but themselves. If Heber could learn by Mackintosh, whether any thing could be done to fix Leyden's situation, and what sort of interest would be most likely to succeed, his friends here might unite every exertion in his favour. . . . . Direct Castle Street, as usual; my new house being in the same street with my old dwelling."

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* The first volume of Joanna Baillie's Plays of the Passions appeared in 1798. Vol. II. followed in 1802.

† "The Complaynt of Scotland, written in 1548; with a Preliminary Dissertation and Glossary, by John Leyden," was published by Constable in January, 1802.

‡ A proposed Institution for purposes of Education at Calcutta.

"Edinburgh, 8th January, 1802.

. . . "Your favour arrived just as I was sitting down to write to you, with a sheet or two of 'King Arthur.' I fear, from a letter which I have received from Mr. William Dundas, that the Indian establishment is tottering, and will probably fall. Leyden has therefore been induced to turn his mind to some other mode of making his way to the East; and proposes taking his degree as a physician and surgeon, with the hope of getting an appointment in the Company's Service as surgeon. If the Institution goes forward, his having secured this step will not prevent his being attached to it; at the same time that it will afford him a provision independent of what seems to be a very precarious establishment. Mr. Dundas has promised to exert himself. . . . I have just returned from the hospitable halls of Hamilton, where I have spent the Christmas." . . . . .

"14th February, 1802.

"I have been silent but not idle. The Transcript of King Arthur is at length finished, being a fragment of about 7000 lines. Let me know how I shall transmit a parcel containing it, with the *Complaynt* and the Border Ballads, of which I expect every day to receive some copies. I think you will be disappointed in the Ballads. I have as yet touched very little on the more remote antiquities of the Border, which, indeed, my songs, all comparatively modern, did not lead me to discuss. Some scattered herbage, however, the elephants may perhaps find. By the way, you will not forget to notice the mountain called *Arthur's Seat*, which overhangs this city. When I was at school the tradition ran that King Arthur occupied as his throne a huge rock upon its summit, and that he beheld from thence some naval engagement upon the Frith of Forth. I am pleasantly interrupted by the post; he brings me a letter from William Dundas, fixing Leyden's appointment as an assistant surgeon to one of the Indian settlements—which is not yet determined; and another from my printer, a very ingenious young man, telling me, that he means to escort the 'Minstrelsy,' up to London in person. I shall, therefore, direct him to transmit my parcel to Mr. Nicol." . . . .

"2d March, 1802.

"I *hope* that long ere this you have received the Ballads, and that they have afforded you some amusement. I hope, also, that the *threatened* third volume will be more interesting to Mrs. Ellis than the dry antiquarian detail of the two first could prove. I hope, moreover, that I shall have the pleasure of seeing you soon, as some circumstances seem not so much to call me to London, as to furnish me with a decent apology for coming up sometime this spring; and I long particularly to say, that I know my friend Mr. Ellis *by sight* as well as *intimately*. I am glad you have seen the Marquess of Lorn, whom I have met frequently at the house of his charming sister, Lady Charlotte Campbell, whom, I am sure, if you are acquainted with her, you must admire as much as I do. Her Grace of Gordon, a great admirer of yours, spent some days here lately, and, like Lord Lorn, was highly entertained with an account of our friendship *à la distance*. I do not, nor did I ever, intend to fob you off with twenty or thirty lines of the second part of Sir Guy. Young Leyden has been much engaged with his studies, otherwise you would have long since received what I now send, namely, the combat between Guy and Colbronde, which I take to be the cream of the romance. . . . . If I do not come to London this spring, I will find a safe opportunity of returning Lady Juliana Berners, with my very best thanks for the use of her reverence's work."

The preceding extracts are picked out of letters, mostly very long ones, in which Scott discusses questions of antiquarian interest, suggested sometimes by Ellis, and sometimes by the course of his own researches among the MSS. of the Advocates' Library. The passages which I have transcribed appear sufficient to give the reader a distinct notion of the tenour of Scott's life while his first considerable work was in progress through the press. In fact, they place before us in a vivid light the chief features of a character which, by this time, was completely formed and settled—which had passed unmoved through the first blandishments of worldly applause, and which no subsequent trials of that sort could ever shake from its early balance:—His calm delight in his own pursuits—the patriotic enthusiasm which mingled with all the best of his literary efforts; his modesty as to his own general merits, combined with a certain dogged resolution to maintain his own first view of a subject, however assailed; his readiness to interrupt his own tasks by any drudgery by which he could assist those of a friend; his steady and determined watchfulness over the struggling fortunes of genius and worth.

The reader has seen that he spent the Christmas of 1801 at Hamilton Palace, in Lanarkshire. To Lady Anne Hamilton he had been introduced by her half-sister, Lady Charlotte Campbell, and both the late and the present Dukes of Hamilton appear to have partaken of Lady Anne's admiration for Glenfinlas, and the Eve of St. John. A morning's ramble to the majestic ruins of the old baronial castle on the precipitous banks of the Evan, and among the adjoining remains of the primeval Caledonian forest, suggested to him a ballad, not inferior in execution to any that he had hitherto produced, and especially interesting as the first in which he grapples with the world of picturesque incident unfolded in the authentic annals of Scotland. With the magnificent localities before him, he skilfully interwove the daring assassination of the Regent Murray by one of the clansmen of "the princely Hamilton." Had the subject been taken up in after years, we might have had another Marmion or Heart of Mid-Lothian; for in Cadyow Castle we have the materials and outline of more than one of the noblest of ballads.

Not long before this piece began to be handed about in Edinburgh, Thomas Campbell had made his appearance there, and at once seized a high place in the literary world by his 'Pleasures of Hope.' Among the most eager to welcome him had been Scott; and I find the brother-bard thus expressing himself concerning the MS. of Cadyow:—

"The verses of Cadyow Castle are perpetually ringing in my imagination—

'Where mightiest of the beasts of chase
 That roam in woody Caledon,
Crashing the forest in his race,
 The mountan bull comes thundering on—

and the arrival of Hamilton, when

'Reeking from the recent deed,
 He dashed his carbine on the ground.'

I have repeated these lines so often on the North Bridge that the whole fraternity of coachmen know me by tongue as I pass. To be sure, to a mind in sober, serious street-walking humour, it must bear an appearance of lunacy when one stamps with the hurried pace and fervent shake of the head, which strong, pithy poetry excites."

Scott finished his Cadyow Castle before the last sheets of the second volume of his "Minstrelsy" had passed through the press; but "the two volumes," as Ballantyne says, "were already full to overflowing;" so it was reserved for the threatened third." The two volumes appeared in the course of January, 1802, from the respectable house of Cadell and Davies in the Strand; and, owing to the cold reception of Lewis's "Tales of Wonder," which had come forth a year earlier, these may be said to have introduced Scott as an original writer to the English public.

In his remarks on the Imitation of Popular Poetry, he says: "Owing to the failure of the vehicle I had chosen, my first efforts to present myself before the public as an original writer proved as vain as those by which I had previously endeavoured to distinguish myself as a translator. Like Lord Home, however, at the battle of Flodden, I did so far well, that I was able to stand and defend myself; and amidst the general depreciation of the 'Tales of Wonder,' my small share of the obnoxious publication was dismissed without censure, and in some cases obtained praise from the critics. The consequences of my escape made me naturally more daring, and I attempted, in my own name, a collection of ballads of various kinds, both ancient and modern, to be connected by the common tie of relation to the Border districts in which I had collected them. The edition was curious, as being the first example of a work printed by my friend and schoolfellow, Mr. James Ballantyne, who at that period was editor of a provincial paper. When the book came out, the imprint, Kelso, was read with wonder by amateurs of typography, who had never heard of such a place, and were astonished at the example of handsome printing which so obscure a town had produced. As for the editorial part of the task, my attempt to imitate the plan and style of Bishop Percy, observing only more strict fidelity concerning my originals, was favourably received by the public."

The first edition of volumes I. and II. of the Minstrelsy consisted of eight hundred copies, fifty of which were on large paper. One of the embellishments was a view of Hermitage castle, the history of which is rather curious. Scott executed a rough sketch of it during the last of his "Liddesdale raids" with Shortreed, standing for that purpose for an hour or more up to his middle in the snow. Nothing can be ruder than the performance, which I have now before me; but his friend William Clerk made a better drawing from it, and from his a third and further improved copy was done by Hugh Williams, the elegant artist, afterwards known as "Greek Williams." Scott used to say the oddest thing of all was, that the engraving, founded on the labours of three draughtsmen, one of whom could not draw a straight line, and the two others had never seen the place meant to be represented, was nevertheless pronounced by the natives of Liddesdale, to give a very fair notion of the ruins of Hermitage.

The edition was exhausted in the course of the year, and the terms of publication having been that Scott should have half the clear profits, his share was exactly £78, 10s.—a sum which certainly could not have repaid him for the actual expenditure incurred in the collection of his materials. Messrs. Cadell and Davies, however, complained, and probably with good reason, that a premature advertisement of a "second and improved edition" had rendered some copies of the first unsaleable.

I shall transcribe the letter in which Mr. George Ellis acknowledges the receipt of his copy of the book.

To Walter Scott, Esq. Advocate, Castle Street, Edinburgh.

"Sunning Hill, March 5, 1802.

"My dear Sir,

"The volumes are arrived, and I have been devouring them, not as a pig does a parcel of grains (by which simile you will judge that I must be brewing, as indeed I am), putting in its snout, shutting its eyes, and swallowing as fast as it can without consideration—but as a schoolboy does a piece of gingerbread; nibbling a little bit here, and a little bit there, smacking his lips, surveying the number of square inches which still remain for his gratification, endeavouring to look it into larger dimensions, and making at every mouthful a tacit vow to protract his enjoyment by restraining his appetite. Now, therefore—but no! I must first assure you on the part of Mrs. E. that if you cannot or will not come to England soon, she must gratify her curiosity and gratitude, by setting off for Scotland, though at the risk of being tempted to pull caps with Mrs. Scott when she arrives at the end of her journey. Next, I must request you to convey to Mr. Leyden my very sincere acknowledgments for his part of the precious parcel. How truly vexatious that such a man should embark, not for the 'fines Atticæ,' but for those of Asia; that the Genius of Scotland, instead of a poor *Complaint*, and an address in the style of 'Navis, quæ tibi creditum debes Virgilium—reddas incolumem, precor,' should not interfere to prevent his loss. I wish to hope that we should, as Sterne says, 'manage these matters better' in England; but now, as regret is unavailing, to the main point of my letter.

"You will not, of course, expect that I should as yet give you any thing like an opinion, *as a critic*, of your volumes; first, because you have thrown into my throat a cate of such magnitude that Cerberus, who had three throats, could not have swallowed a third part of it without shutting his eyes; and secondly, because, although I have gone a little farther than George Nicol the bookseller, who cannot cease exclaiming, "What a beautiful book!" and is distracted with jealousy of your Kelso Bulmer, yet, as I said before, I have not been able yet to *digest* a great deal of your 'Border Minstrelsy.' I have, however, taken such a survey as satisfies me that your plan is neither too comprehensive nor too contracted; that the parts are properly distinct; and that they are (to preserve the painter's metaphor) *made out* just as they ought to be. Your introductory chapter is, I think, particularly good; and I was much pleased, although a little surprised, at finding that it was made to serve as a *recueil des pièces justificatives* to your view of the state of manners among your Borderers, which I venture to say will be more thumbed than any part of the volume.

"You will easily believe that I cast many an anxious look for the annunciation of 'Sir Tristrem,' and will not be surprised that I was at first rather disappointed at not finding any thing like a solemn engagement to produce him to the world within some fixed and limited period. Upon reflection, however, I really think you have judged wisely, and that you have best promoted the interests of literature, by sending, as the *harbinger* of the 'Knight of Leonais,' a collection which must form a parlour-window book in every house in Britain which contains a parlour and a window. I am happy to find my *old favourites* in their natural situation—indeed in the only situation which can enable a Southern reader to estimate their merits. You remember what somebody said of the Prince de Condé's army during the wars of the Fronde, viz.—"that it would be a very fine army whenever it came of age." Of the Murrays and Armstrongs of your Border Ballads, it might be said that they might grow, when the age of good taste should arrive, to a Glenfinlas or an Eve of St. John. Leyden's additional poems are also very beautiful. I meant, at setting out, a few simple words of thanks, and behold I have written a letter; but no matter;—I shall return to the charge after a more attentive perusal. Ever yours very faithfully,

G. Ellis."

I might fill many pages by transcribing similar letters from persons of acknowledged discernment in this branch of literature; John Duke of Roxburgh is among the number, and he conveys also a complimentary message from the late Earl Spencer; Pinkerton issues his decree of approbation as *ex cathedrâ;* Chalmers overflows with heartier praise; and even Joseph Ritson extols his presentation copy as "the most valuable literary treasure in his possession." There follows enough of female admiration to have been dangerous for another man; a score of fine ladies contend who shall be the most extravagant in encomium—and as many professed blue-stockings come after; among, or rather above the rest, Anna Seward, "the Swan of Lichfield," who laments that her "bright luminary," Darwin, does not survive to partake her raptures;—observes, that "in the Border Ballads the first strong rays of the Delphic orb illuminate Jellon Graeme;" and concludes with a fact indisputable, but strangely expressed, viz. that "the Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament, Cowdenknowes, &c. &c., *climatically* preceded the treasures of Burns, and the consummate Glenfinlas and Eve of St. John." Scott felt as acutely as any malevolent critic the pedantic affectations of Miss Seward's epistolary style, but in her case sound sense as well as vigorous ability had unfortunately condescended to an absurd disguise; he looked below it, and was far from confounding her honest praise with the flat superlatives either of worldly parrots or weak enthusiasts.

CHAPTER XI.

PREPARATION OF VOLUME III. OF THE MINSTRELSY—AND OF SIR TRISTREM—CORRESPONDENCE WITH MISS SEWARD AND MR. ELLIS—BALLAD OF THE REIVER'S WEDDING—COMMENCEMENT OF THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL—VISIT TO LONDON AND OXFORD—COMPLETION OF THE MINSTRELSY OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER.—1802-1803.

THE approbation with which the first two volumes of the Minstrelsy were received, stimulated Scott to fresh diligence in the preparation of a third; while "Sir Tristrem"—it being now settled that this romance should form a separate volume—was transmitted, without delay, to the printer at Kelso. As early as March 30th, 1802, Ballantyne, who had just returned from London, writes thus:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Castle Street, Edinburgh.

"Dear Sir,

"By to-morrow's Fly I shall send the remaining materials for Minstrelsy, together with three sheets of Sir Tristrem. . . . I shall ever think the printing the Scottish Minstrelsy one of the most fortunate circumstances of my life. I have gained, not lost by it, in a pecuniary light; and the prospects it has been the means of opening to me, may advantageously influence my future destiny. I can never be sufficiently grateful for the interest you unceasingly take in my welfare. Your query respecting *Edinburgh*, I am *yet* at a loss to answer. To say truth, the expenses I have incurred in my resolution to acquire a character for elegant printing, whatever might be the result, cramp considerably my present exertions. A short time, I trust, will make me easier, and I shall then contemplate the road before me with a steady eye. One thing alone is clear—that Kelso cannot be my abiding place for aye; sooner or later, emigrate I must and will; but at all events, I must wait till my plumes are grown.

I am, dear sir, your faithful and obliged

J. B."

On learning that a third volume of the Minstrelsy was in progress, Miss Seward forwarded to the Editor "Rich Auld Willie's Farewell," a Scotch ballad of her own manufacture, meaning, no doubt, to place it at his disposal, for the section of "Imitations." His answer (dated Edinburgh, June 29, 1802), after many compliments to the *Auld Willie*, of which he made the use that had been intended, proceeds as follows:

"I have some thoughts of attempting a Border ballad in the comic manner; but I almost despair of bringing it well out. A certain Sir William Scott, from whom I am descended, was ill-advised enough to plunder the estate of Sir Gideon Murray of Elibank, ancestor to the present Lord Elibank. The marauder was defeated, seized, and brought in fetters to the castle of Elibank, upon the Tweed. The Lady Murray (agreeably to the custom of all ladies in ancient tales) was seated on the battlements, and descried the return of her husband with his prisoners. She immediately inquired what he meant to do with the young Knight of Harden, which was the *petit titre* of Sir William Scott. "Hang the robber assuredly,' was the answer of Sir Gideon. 'What!' answered the lady, 'hang the handsome young knight of Harden when I have three ill-favoured daughters unmarried! No, no, Sir Gideon, we'll force him to marry our Meg.' Now tradition says, that Meg Murray was the ugliest woman in the four counties, and that she was called, in the homely dialect of the time, *meikle-mouthed Meg* (I will not affront you by an explanation).* Sir Gideon, like a good husband and tender father, entered into his wife's sentiments, and preferred to Sir William the alternative of becoming his son-in-law, or decorating with his carcase the *kindly* gallows of Elibank. The lady was so very ugly, that Sir William, the handsomest man of his time, positively refused the honour of her hand. Three days were allowed him to make up his mind; and it was not until he found one end of a rope made fast to his neck, and the other knitted to a sturdy oak bough, that his resolution gave way, and he preferred an ugly wife to the literal noose. It is said they were afterwards a very happy couple. She had a curious hand at pickling the beef which he stole; and, marauder as he was, he had little reason to dread being twitted by the pawky gowk. This, either by its being perpetually told to me when young, or by a perverted taste for such anecdotes, has always struck me as a good subject for a comic ballad, and how happy should I be were Miss Seward to agree in opinion with me!

"This little tale may serve for an introduction to some observations I have to offer upon our popular poetry. It will at least so far disclose your correspondent's weak side, as to induce you to make allowance for my mode of arguing. Much of its peculiar charm is indeed, I believe, to be attributed solely to its *locality*. A very commonplace and obvious epithet, when applied to a scene which we have been accustomed to view with pleasure, recalls to us not merely the local scenery, but a thousand little nameless associations, which we are unable to separate or to define. In some verses of that eccentric, but admirable poet, Coleridge, he talks of

'An old rude tale that suited well
The ruins wild and hoary.'

I think there are few who have not been in some degree touched with this local sympathy. Tell a peasant an ordinary tale of robbery and murder, and perhaps you may fail to interest him; but to excite his terrors, you assure him it happened on the very heath he usually crosses, or to a man whose family he has known, and you rarely meet such a mere image of Humanity as remains entirely unmoved. I suspect it is pretty much the same with myself, and many of my countrymen, who are charmed by the effect of local description, and sometimes impute that effect to the poet which is produced by the recollections and associations which his verses excite. Why else did Sir Philip Sydney feel that the tale of Percy and Douglas moved him like the sound of a trumpet? or why is it that a Swiss sickens at hearing the famous Ranz des Vaches, to which the native of any other country would have listened for a hundred days, without any other sensation than ennui? I fear our poetical taste is in general much more linked with our prejudices of birth, of education, and of habitual thinking, than our vanity will allow us to suppose; and that, let the point of the poet's dart be as sharp as that of Cupid, it is the wings lent it by the fancy and prepossessions of the gentle reader which carry it to the mark. It may appear like great egotism to pretend to illustrate my position from the reception which the productions of so mere a ballad-monger as myself have met with from the public; but I cannot help observing that all Scotchmen prefer the Eve of St. John to Glenfinlas, and most of my English friends entertain precisely an opposite opinion. . . . I have been writing this letter by a paragraph at a time for about a month, this being the season when we are most devoted to the

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* It is commonly said that all Meg's descendants have inherited something of her characteristic feature. The Poet certainly was no exception to the rule.

'Drowsy bench and babbling hall.'

I have the honour," &c. &c. . . . .

Miss Seward, in her next letter, offers an apology for not having sooner begged Scott to place her name among the *subscribers* to his third volume. His answer is in these words:—

"Lasswade, July, 1802.

"I am very sorry to have left you under a mistake about my third volume. The truth is, that highly as I should feel myself flattered by the encouragement of Miss Seward's name, I cannot, in the present instance, avail myself of it, as the Ballads are not published by subscription. Providence having, I suppose, foreseen that my literary qualifications, like those of many more distinguished persons, might not, *par hazard*, support me exactly as I would like, allotted me a small patrimony, which, joined to my professional income, and my appointments in the characteristic office of Sheriff of Ettrick Forest, serves to render my literary pursuits more a matter of amusement than an object of emolument. With this explanation, I hope you will honour me by accepting the third volume as soon as published, which will be in the beginning of next year, and I also hope, that under the circumstances, you will hold me acquitted of the silly vanity of wishing to be thought a *gentleman*-author.

"The ballad of The Reiver's Wedding is not yet written, but I have finished one of a tragic cast, founded upon the death of the Regent Murray, who was shot in Linlithgow, by James Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh. The following verses contain the catastrophe, as told by Hamilton himself to his chief and his kinsmen:—

'With hackbut bent,' &c. &c.

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"This Bothwellhaugh has occupied such an unwarrantable proportion of my letter, that I have hardly time to tell you how much I join in your admiration of Tam o' Shanter, which I verily believe to be inimitable, both in the serious and ludicrous parts, as well as the singularly happy combination of both. I request Miss Seward to believe," &c.

The "Reiver's Wedding" never was completed, but I have found two copies of its commencement, and I shall make no apologies for inserting here what seems to have been the second one. It will be seen that he had meant to mingle with Sir William's capture, Auld Wat's

Foray of the Bassened Bull, and the Feast of Spurs; and that, I know not for what reason, Lochwood, the ancient fortress of the Johnstones in Annandale, has been substituted for the real locality of his ancestor's Drum-head Wedding Contract:—

"THE REIVER'S WEDDING.

'O will ye hear a mirthful bourd?
Or will ye hear of courtesie?
Or will ye hear how a gallant lord
Was wedded to a gay ladye?'

'Ca' out the kye,' quo' the village herd,
As he stood on the knowe,
'Ca' this ane's nine and that ane's ten,
And bauld Lord William's cow.'

'Ah! by my sooth,' quoth William then,
'And stands it that way now,
When knave and churl have nine and ten,
That the Lord has but his cow?

'I swear by the light of the Michaelmas moon
And the night of Mary high,
And by the edge of my braidsword brown,
They shall soon say Harden's kye.'

He took a bugle frae his side,
With names carved o'er and o'er—
Full many a chief of meikle pride,
That Border bugle bore——[*]

He blew a note baith sharp and hie,
Till rock and water rang around—
Three score of mosstroopers and three
Have mounted at that bugle sound.

The Michaelmas moon had entered then,
And ere she wan the full,
Ye might see by her light in Harden glen
A bow o' kye and a bassened bull.

And loud, and loud in Harden tower
The quaigh gaed round wi' meikle glee;
For the English beef was brought in bower,
And the English ale flowed merrilie.

And mony a guest from Teviotside
And Yarrow's Braes were there;
Was never a lord in Scotland wide
That made more dainty fare.

They ate, they laugh'd, they sang and quaff'd,
Till nought on board was seen,
When knight and squire were boune to dine,
But a spur of silver sheen.

Lord William has ta'en his berry brown steed—
A sore shent man was he:
'Wait ye, my guests, a little speed—
Weel feasted ye shall be.'

He rode him down by Falsehope burn,
His cousin dear to see,

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[*] This celebrated horn is still in the possession of Lord Polwarth.

With him to take a riding turn—
  Wat-draw-the-sword was he.

And when he came to Falsehope glen,
  Beneath the trysting tree,
On the smooth green was carved plain,*
  'To Lochwood bound are we.'

'O if they be gane to dark Lochwood
  To drive the Warden's gear,
Betwixt our names, I ween, there 's feud;
  I'll go and have my share:

'For little reck I for Johnstone's feud,
  The Warden though he be.'
So Lord William is away to dark Lochwood,
  With riders barely three.

The Warden's daughters in Lochwood sate,
  Were all both fair and gay,
All save the Lady Margaret,
  And she was wan and wae.

The sister, Jean, had a full fair skin,
  And Grace was bauld and braw;
But the leal-fast heart her breast within
  It weel was worth them a'.

Her father's pranked her sisters twa
  With meikle joy and pride;
But Margaret maun seek Dundrennan's wa'—
  She ne'er can be a bride.

On spear and casque by gallants gent
  Her sisters' scarfs were borne,
But never at tilt or tournament
  Were Margaret's colours worn.

Her sisters rode to Thirlstane bower,
  But she was left at hame
To wander round the gloomy tower,
  And sigh young Harden's name.

'Of all the knights, the knight most fair,
  From Yarrow to the Tyne,'
Soft sigh'd the maid, 'is Harden's heir,
  But ne'er can he be mine;

'Of all the maids, the foulest maid
  From Teviot to the Dee,
Ah!' sighing sad, that lady said,
  'Can ne'er young Harden's be'—

She looked up the briery glen,
  And up the mossy brae,
And she saw a score of her father's men
  Yclad in the Johnstone grey.

O fast and fast they downwards sped
  The moss and briers among,
And in the midst the troopers led
  A shackled knight along."

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* "At Linton, in Roxburghshire, there is a circle of stones surrounding a smooth plot of turf, called the *Tryst*, or place of appointment, which tradition avers to have been the rendezvous of the neighbouring warriors. The name of the leader was cut in the turf, and the arrangement of the letters announced to his followers the course which he had taken."—***Introduction to the Minstrelsy***, p. 185.

As soon as the autumn vacation set Scott at liberty, he proceeded to the Borders with Leyden. "We have just concluded," he tells Ellis on his return to Edinburgh, "an excursion of two or three weeks through my jurisdiction of Selkirkshire, where, in defiance of mountains, rivers, and bogs damp and dry, we have penetrated the very recesses of Ettrick Forest, to which district if I ever have the happiness of welcoming you, you will be convinced that I am truly the sheriff of the 'cairn and the scaur.' In the course of our grand tour, besides the risks of swamping and breaking our necks, we encountered the formidable hardships of sleeping upon peat-stacks, and eating mutton slain by no common butcher, but deprived of life by the judgment of God, as a coroner's inquest would express themselves. I have, however, not only escaped safe 'per varios casus per tot discrimina rerum,' but returned *loaded* with the treasures of oral tradition. The principal result of our enquiries has been a complete and perfect copy of 'Maitland with his Auld Berd Graie,' referred to by Douglas in his 'Palice of Honour,' along with John the Reef and other popular characters, and celebrated also in the poems from the Maitland MS. You may guess the surprise of Leyden and myself when this was presented to us, copied down from the recitation of an old shepherd, by a country farmer, and with no greater corruptions than might be supposed to be introduced by the lapse of time, and the ignorance of reciters. I don't suppose it was originally composed later than the days of Blind Harry. Many of the old words are retained, which neither the reciter nor the copyer understood. Such are the military engines *sowies*, *springwalls* (springalds), and many others. Though the poetical merit of this curiosity is not striking, yet it has an odd energy and dramatic effect."

A few weeks later, he thus answers Ellis's enquiries as to the progress of the Sir Tristrem:—"The worthy knight is still in embryo, though the whole poetry is printed. The fact is, that a second edition of the Minstrelsy has been demanded more suddenly than I expected, and has occupied my immediate attention. I have also my third volume to compile and arrange; for the Minstrelsy is now to be completed altogether independent of the *preux chevalier*, who might hang heavy upon its skirts. I assure you my *Continuation* is mere doggerel, not poetry—it is *argued in the same division* with Thomas's own production, and therefore not worth sending. However, you may depend on having the whole long before publication. I have derived much information from Turner: he combines the knowledge of the Welsh and northern authorities, and, in despite of a most detestable *Gibbonism*, his book is interesting.* I intend to study the Welsh triads before I finally commit myself on the subject of Border poetry..... As for Mister Ritson, he and I still continue on decent terms; and, in truth, he makes *pate de velours*; but I dread I shall see 'a whisker first and then a claw' stretched out against my unfortunate lucubrations. Ballantyne, the Kelso printer, who has a book of his in hand, groans in spirit over the peculiarities of his orthography, which, sooth to say, hath seldom been equalled since the days of Elphinstone, the ingenious author of the mode of spelling according to the pronunciation, which he aptly termed 'Propriety ascertained in her Picture.' I fear the remark of Festus to St. Paul might be more justly applied to this curious investigator of antiquity, and it is a pity such research should be rendered useless by the infirmities of his temper. I have lately had from him *a copie* of 'Ye litel wee Mon,' of which I think I can make some use. In return, I have sent him a sight of Auld Maitland, the original MS. If you are curious, I dare say you may easily see it. Indeed, I might easily send you a transcribed copy,—but I wish him to see it *in puris naturalibus*."

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* The first part of Mr. Sharon Turner's History of the Anglo-Saxons was published in 1799; the second in 1801.

Ritson had visited Lasswade in the course of this autumn, and his conduct had been such as to render the precaution here alluded to very proper in the case of one who, like Scott, was resolved to steer clear of the feuds and heartburnings that gave rise to such scandalous scenes among the other antiquaries of the day. Leyden met Ritson at the cottage, and, far from imitating his host's forbearance, took a pleasure in tormenting the half-mad pedant by every means in his power. Among other circumstances, Scott delighted to detail the scene that occurred when his two uncouth allies met at dinner. Well knowing Ritson's holy horror of all animal food, Leyden complained that the joint on the table was overdone. "Indeed, for that matter," cried he, "meat can never be too little done, and raw is best of all." He sent to the kitchen accordingly for a plate of literally raw beef, and manfully eat it up, with no sauce but the exquisite ruefulness of the Pythagorean's glances.

Mr. Robert Pierce Gillies, a gentleman of the Scotch bar, well known, among other things, for some excellent translations from the German, was present at the cottage another day, when Ritson was in Scotland. He has described the whole scene in the second section of his "Recollections of Sir Walter Scott,"—a set of papers in which many inaccurate statements occur, but which convey, on the whole, a lively impression of the persons introduced.* "In approaching the cottage," he says, "I was struck with the exceeding air of neatness that prevailed around. The hand of tasteful cultivation had been there, and all methods employed to convert an ordinary thatched cottage into a handsome and comfortable abode. The doorway was in an angle formed by the original old cabin and the additional rooms which had been built to it. In a moment I had passed through the lobby, and found myself in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Scott, and Mr. William Erskine. At this early period, Scott was more like the portrait, by Saxon, engraved for the first edition of 'The Lady of the Lake,' than to any subsequent picture. He retained in features and form an impress of that elasticity and youthful vivacity, which he used to complain wore off after he was forty, and by *his own* account was exchanged for the plodding heaviness of an operose student. He had now, indeed, somewhat of a boyish gaiety of look, and in person was tall, slim, and extremely active. On my entrance, he was seated at a table near the window, and occupied in transcribing from an old MS. volume into his commonplace book. As to costume, he was carelessly attired in a widely-made shooting-dress, with a coloured handkerchief round his neck; the very antithesis of style usually adopted either by student or barrister. 'Hah!' he exclaimed, 'welcome, thrice welcome! for we are just proposing to have lunch, and then a long, long walk through wood and wold, in which I am sure you will join us. But no man can thoroughly appreciate the pleasure of such a life who has not known what it is to rise spiritless in a morning, and *daidle* out half the day in the Parliament House, where we must all *compear* within another fortnight; then to spend the rest of one's time in applying proofs to *condescendences*, and hauling out papers to bamboozle judges, most of whom are *daized* enough already. What say you, Counsellor Erskine? Come—*alla guerra*—rouse, and say whether you are for a walk to-day.'—'Certainly, in such fine weather I don't see what we can propose better. It is the last I shall see of the country this vacation.'—'Nay, say not so, man; we shall all be merry twice and once yet before the evil days arrive.'—'I'll tell you what I have thought of this half-hour: it is a plan of mine to rent a cottage and a cabbage-garden—not here, but somewhere farther out of town, and never again, after this one session, to enter the Parliament House.'—'And you'll ask Ritson, perhaps,' said Scott, 'to stay with you and help to consume the cabbages. Rest assured we shall both sit on the bench one day; but, heigho! we shall both have become very old and philosophical by that time.'—'Did you not expect Lewis here this morning?'—'Lewis, I venture to say, is not up yet, for he dined at Dalkeith yesterday, and of course found the wine very good. Besides, you know, I have intrusted him with *Finella* till his own steed gets well of a sprain, and he could not join our walking excursion.—I see you are admiring that broken sword,' he added, addressing me, 'and your interest would increase if you knew how much labour was required to bring it into my possession. In order to grasp that mouldering weapon, I was obliged to drain the well at the Castle of Dunnottar. But it is time to set out; and here is one *friend*' (addressing himself to a large dog) 'who is very impatient to be in the field. He tells me he knows where to find a hare in the woods of Mavisbank. And here is another' (caressing a terrier), 'who longs to have a battle with the weazels and water-rats, and the foumart that *wons* near the caves of Gorthy: so let us be off.'"

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* These papers appeared in Frazer's Magazine for September, November, and December, 1835, and January, 1836.

Mr. Gillies tells us, that in the course of their walk to Roslyn Scott's foot slipped, as he was scrambling towards a cave on the edge of a precipitous bank, and that, "had there been no trees in the way, he must have been killed, but midway he was stopped by a large root of hazel, when, instead of struggling, which would have made matters greatly worse, he seemed perfectly resigned to his fate, and slipped through the tangled thicket till he lay flat on the river's brink. He rose in an instant from his recumbent attitude, and with a hearty laugh called out, 'Now, let me see who else will do the like.' He scrambled up the cliff with alacrity, and entered the cave, where we had a long dialogue."

Even after he was an old and hoary man, he continually encountered such risks with the same recklessness. The extraordinary strength of his hands and arms was his great reliance in all such difficulties, and if he could see any thing to lay hold of, he was afraid of no leap, or rather hop, that came in his way. Mr. Gillies says, that when they drew near the famous chapel of Roslyn, Erskine expressed a hope that they might, as habitual visitors, escape hearing the usual endless story of the silly old woman that showed the ruins; but Scott answered, "There is a pleasure in the song which none but the songstress knows, and by telling her we know it all already, we should make the poor devil unhappy."

On their return to the cottage, Scott enquired for *the learned cabbage-eater*, meaning Ritson, who had been expected to dinner. "Indeed," answered his wife, "you may be happy he is not here, he is so very disagreeable. Mr. Leyden, I believe, frightened him away." It turned out that it was even so. When Ritson appeared, a round of cold beef was on the luncheon-table, and Mrs. Scott, forgetting his peculiar creed, offered him a slice.. "The antiquary, in his indignation, expressed himself in such outrageous terms to the lady, that Leyden first tried to correct him by ridicule, and then, on the madman growing more violent, became angry in his turn, till at last he threatened, that if he were not silent, he would *thraw his neck*. Scott shook his head at this recital, which Leyden observing, grew vehement in his own justification. Scott said not a word in reply, but took up a large bunch of feathers fastened to a stick, denominated *a duster*, and shook it about the student's ears till he laughed—then changed the subject."

All this is very characteristic of the parties. Scott's playful aversion to dispute was a trait in his mind and manners that could alone have enabled him to make use at one and the same time, and for the same purpose, of two such persons as Ritson and Leyden.

To return to Ellis. In answer to Scott's letter last quoted, he urged him to make Sir Tristrem *volume fourth* of the Minstrelsy. "As to his hanging heavy on hand" (says he), "I admit, that as a separate publication he may do so, but the Minstrelsy is now established as a library book, and in this bibliomaniac age, no one would think it perfect without the *preux chevalier*, if you avow the said chevalier as your adopted son. Let him, at least, be printed in the same size and paper, and then I am persuaded our booksellers will do the rest fast enough, upon the credit of your reputation." Scott replies (November), that it is now too late to alter the fate of Sir Tristrem. "Longman, of Paternoster Row, has been down here in summer, and purchased the copyright of the Minstrelsy. Sir Tristrem is a separate property, but will be on the same scale in point of size."

The next letter introduces to Ellis's personal acquaintance Leyden, who had by this time completed his medical studies, and taken his degree as a physician. In it Scott says: "At length I write to you per favour of John Leyden. I presume Heber has made you sufficiently acquainted with this original (for he is a true one), and therefore I will trust to your own kindness, should an opportunity occur of doing him any service in furthering his Indian plans. You will readily judge, [illegible]g with him, that with a very uncommon stock of acquired knowledge, he wants a good deal of another sort of knowledge which is only to be gleaned from an early intercourse with polished society. But he dances his bear with a good confidence, and the bear itself is a very good-natured and well-conditioned animal. All his friends are much interested about him, as the qualities both of his heart and head are very uncommon." He adds: "My third volume will appear as soon after the others as the despatch of the printers will admit. Some parts will, I think, interest you; particularly the preservation of the entire 'Auld Maitland' by oral tradition, probably from the reign of Edward II. or III. As I have never met with such an instance, I must request you to enquire all about it of Leyden, who was with me when I received my first copy. In the third volume I intend to publish *Cadyow Castle*, a historical sort of a ballad upon the death of the Regent Murray, and besides this, a long poem of my own. It will be a kind of romance of Border chivalry, in a light-horseman sort of stanza."

He appears to have sent a copy of *Cadyow Castle* by Leyden, whose reception at Mr. Ellis's villa, near Windsor, is thus described in the next letter of the correspondence. "Let me thank you," says Ellis, "for your poem, which Mrs. E. has *not* received, and which, indeed, I could not help feeling glad, in the first instance (though we now begin to grow very impatient for it), that she did not receive. Leyden would not have been your Leyden if he had arrived like a careful citizen, with all his packages carefully docketed in his portmanteau. If on the point of leaving for many years, perhaps for ever, his country and the friends of his youth, he had not deferred to the last, and till it was too late, all that could be easily done, and that stupid people find time to do—if he had not arrived with all his ideas perfectly bewildered—and tired to death, and sick—and without any settled plans for futurity, or any accurate recollection of the past—we should have felt much more disappointed than we were by the non-arrival of your poem, which he assured us he remembered to have left somewhere or other, and therefore felt very confident of recovering. In short, his whole air and countenance told us, 'I am come to be one of your friends,' and we immediately took him at his word."

By the "romance of Border Chivalry," which was designed to form part of the third volume of the Minstrelsy, the reader is to understand the first draught of The Lay of the Last Minstrel; and the author's description of it as being "in a light-horseman sort of stanza," was probably suggested by the circumstances under which the greater part of that original draught was composed. He has told us, in his Introduction of 1830, that the poem originated in a request of the young and lovely Countess of Dalkeith, that he would write a ballad on the legend of Gilpin Horner: that he began it at Lasswade, and read the opening stanzas, as soon as they were written, to his friends, Erskine and Cranstoun: that their reception of these was apparently so cold as to discourage him, and disgust him with what he had done; but that finding, a few days afterwards, that the stanzas had nevertheless excited their curiosity, and haunted their memory, he was encouraged to resume the undertaking. The scene and date of this resumption I owe to the recollection of the then Cornet of the Edinburgh light-horse. While the troop were on permanent duty at Musselburgh, in the autumnal recess of 1802, the quartermaster, during a charge on Portobello sands, received a kick of a horse, which confined him for three days to his lodgings. Mr. Skene found him busy with his pen; and he produced before these three days expired the first canto of the Lay, very nearly, if his friend's memory may be trusted, in the state in which it was ultimately published. That the whole poem was sketched and filled in with extraordinary rapidity, there can be no difficulty in believing. He himself says (in the Introduction of 1830), that after he had once got fairly into the vein, it proceeded at the rate of about a canto in a week. The Lay, however, like the Tristrem, soon outgrew the dimensions which he had originally contemplated; the design of including it in the third volume of the Minstrelsy was, of course, abandoned; and it did not appear until nearly three years after that fortunate mishap on the beach of Portobello.

To return to Scott's correspondence:—it shows that Ellis had, although involved at the time in serious family afflictions, exerted himself strenuously and effectively in behalf of Leyden; a service which Scott acknowledges most warmly. His friend writes, too, at great length about the completion of the Minstrelsy, urging, in particular, the propriety of prefixing to it a good map of the Scottish Border—"for, in truth," he says, "I have never been able to find even *Ercildoune* on any map in my possession." The poet answers (January 30, 1803): "The idea of a map pleases me much, but there are two strong objections to its being prefixed to this edition. *First*, we shall be out in a month, within which time it would be difficult, I apprehend, for Mr. Arrowsmith, labouring under the disadvantages which I am about to mention, to complete the map. *Secondly*, you are to know that I am an utter stranger to geometry, surveying, and all such *inflammatory* branches of study, as Mrs. Malaprop calls them. My education was unfortunately interrupted by a long indisposition, which occasioned my residing for about two years in the country with a good maiden aunt, who permitted and encouraged me to run about the fields, as wild as any buck that ever fled from the face of man. Hence my geographical knowledge is merely practical, and though I think that in the *South country* 'I could be a guide worth ony twa, that may in Liddesdale be found,' yet I believe Hobby Noble, or Kinmont Willie, would beat me at laying down a map. I have, however, sense enough to see that our mode of executing maps in general is any thing but perfect. The country is most inaccurately defined, and had your General (Wade) marched through Scotland by the assistance of Ainslie's map, his flying artillery would soon have stuck fast among our morasses, and his horse broke their knees among our cairns. Your system of a bird's-eye view is certainly the true principle." He goes on to mention some better maps than Ellis seemed to have consulted, and to inform him where he may discover Ercildoune, under its modern form of Earlston, upon the river Leader; and concludes, "the map then must be deferred until the *third* edition, about which, I suppose, Longman thinks courageously." He then adds: "I am almost glad Cadyow Castle is miscarried, as I have rather lost conceit of it at present, being engaged on what I think will be a more generally interesting legend. I have called it the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' and put it in the mouth of an old bard, who is supposed to have survived all his brethren, and to have lived down to 1690. The thing itself will be very long, but I would willingly have sent you the *Introduction* had you been still in possession of your senatorial privilege;—but double postage would be a strange innovation on the established price of ballads, which have always sold at the easy rate of one halfpenny."

I must now give part of a letter in which Leyden recurs to the kindness, and sketches the person and manners of George Ellis, in a highly characteristic fashion. He says to Scott (January 25, 1803), "You were, no doubt, surprised, my dear sir, that I gave you so little information about my movements; but it is only this day I have been able to speak of them with any precision. Such is the tardiness in every thing connected with the India House, that a person who is present in the character of spectator is quite amazed; but if we consider it as the centre of a vast commercial concern, in comparison of which Tyre and Sidon, and the Great Carthage itself, must inevitably dwindle into huckster shops, we are induced to think of them with more patience. Even yet I cannot answer you exactly—being very uncertain whether I am to sail on the 18th of next month, or the 28th.

1.

"Now shal I telen to ye, I wis,
Of that kind Squeyere Ellis,
That wonnen in this cité;
Courtess he is, by God almizt!
That he nis nought ymaked knizt
It is the more pitie.

2.

"He konnen better eche glewe
Than I konnen to ye shewe,
Paith maist and least.
So wel he wirketh in eche thewe,
That where he commen, I tel ye trewe,
He is ane welcome guest.

3.

"His eyen graye as glas ben,
And his looks ben alto kene,
Loveliche to paramour.
Brown as acorn ben his faxe,
His face is thin as bettel axe,
That dealeth dintis doure,

4.

"His wit ben both keene and sharpe,
To knizt or dame that carll can carpe
Either in hall or bower;
And had I not this squeyere yfonde,
I had been at the se-gronde,
Which had been great doloure.

5.

"In him Ich finder non other euil,
Save that his nostril so doth snivel,
It is not myche my choice.
But than his wit ben so perquire,
That thai who can his carpynge here
Thai thynke not of his voice.

6.

"To speake not of his gentel dame
Ich wis it war bothe sin and shame,
Lede is not to layne;
She is a ladye of sich pryce,
To leven in that dame's service
Meni wer ful fain.

7.

"Hir wit is ful kene and queynt,
And hir stature smale and gent,
Semeleche to be seene;
Armes, hondes, and fingres smale,
Of pearl beth eche fingre nale;
She mizt be ferys Quene.

8.

"That lady she wil giv a scarf
To him that wold ykillen a dwarf
Churl of paynim kinde;
That dwarf he is so fell of mode
Tho ye shold drynk his hert blode,
Gode wold ze never finde.

9.

"That dwarf he ben beardless and bare,
And weazelblown ben al his hair,
Like an ympe or elfe;
And in this world beth al and hale
Ben nothynge that he loveth and dele
Safe his owen selfe" . . . . .

The fourth of these verses refers to the loss of the Hindostan, in which ship Leyden, but for Mr. Ellis's interference, must have sailed, and which foundered in the Channel. The dwarf is, of course, Ritson.

After various letters of the same kind, I find one, dated Isle of Wight, April the 1st (1803), the morning before Leyden finally sailed. "I have been two days on board," he writes, "and you may conceive what an excellent change I made from the politest society of London to the brutish skippers of Portsmouth. Our crew consists of a very motley party; but there are some of them very ingenious, and Robert Smith, Sidney's brother, is himself a host. He is almost the most powerful man I have met with. My money concerns I shall consider you as trustee of; and all remittances, as well as dividends from Longman, will be to your direction. These, I hope, we shall soon be able to adjust very accurately. Money may be paid, but kindness never. Assure your excellent Charlotte, whom I shall ever recollect with affection and esteem, how much I regret that I did not see her before my departure, and say a thousand pretty things, for which my mind is too much agitated, being in the situation of Coleridge's devil and his grannam, 'expecting and hoping the trumpet to blow.' And now, my dear Scott, adieu. Think of me with indulgence, and be certain, that wherever, and in whatever situation, John Leyden is, his heart is unchanged by place, and his soul by time."

This letter was received by Scott, not in Edinburgh, but in London. He had hurried up to town as soon as the Court of Session rose for the spring vacation, in hopes of seeing his friend once more before he left England; but he came too late. He had, however, done his part: he

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

The letter is addressed to "Mr James Ballantyne, printer, Abbeyhill, Edinburgh," which shows, that before the third volume of the Minstrelsy passed through the press, the migration recommended two years earlier had at length taken place. "It was about the end of 1802," says Ballantyne in his Memorandum, "that I closed with a plan so congenial to my wishes. I removed, bag and baggage, to Edinburgh, finding accommodation for two presses, and a proof one, in the precincts of Holyrood-house, then deriving new lustre and interest from the recent arrival of the royal exiles of France. In these obscure premises some of the most beautiful productions of what we called *The Border Press* were printed." The Memorandum states that Scott having renewed his hint as to pecuniary assistance, so soon as the printer found his finances strained, "a liberal loan was advanced accordingly." Of course Scott's interest was constantly exerted in procuring employment, both legal and literary, for his friend's types:—and the concern grew and prospered.

Heber, and Mackintosh then at the height of his reputation as a conversationist, and daily advancing also at the Bar, had been ready to welcome Scott in town as old friends; and Rogers, William Stewart Rose, and several other men of literary eminence were at the same time added to the list of his acquaintance. His principal object, however—having missed Leyden—was to peruse and make extracts from some MSS. in the library of John Duke of Roxburghe, for the illustration of the Tristrem; and he derived no small assistance in other researches of the like kind from the collections which the indefatigable and obliging Douce placed at his disposal. Having completed these labours, he and Mrs. Scott went, with Heber, and Douce, to Sunninghill, where they spent a happy week, and Mr. and Mrs. Ellis heard the first two or three cantos of the Lay of the Last Minstrel read under an old oak in Windsor Forest.

I should not omit to say, that Scott was attended on this trip by a fine bull-terrier, by name Camp, and that Camp's master, and mistress too, were delighted by finding that the Ellises cordially sympathized in their fondness for this animal, and indeed for all his race. At parting, Scott promised to send one of Camp's progeny, in the course of the season, to Sunninghill.

From thence they proceeded to Oxford, accompanied by Heber; and it was on this occasion, as I believe, that Scott first saw his friend's brother, Reginald, in afterdays the apostolic Bishop of Calcutta. He had just been declared the successful competitor for that year's poetical prize, and read to Scott at breakfast, in Brazen Nose College, the MS. of his "Palestine." Scott observed that, in the verses on Solomon's Temple, one striking circumstance had escaped him, namely, that no tools were used in its erection. Reginald retired for a few minutes to the corner of the room, and returned with the beautiful lines,—

"No hammer fell, no ponderous axes rung,
Like some tall palm the mystic fabric sprung.
Majestic silence," &c.*

After inspecting the University and Blenheim, under the guidance of the Hebers, Scott returned to London, as appears from the following letter to Miss Seward, who had been writing to him on the subject of her projected biography of Dr. Darwin. The conclusion and date are lost.

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* See "Life of Bishop Heber, by his Widow," edition 1830, vol. i. p. 30.

"I have been for about a fortnight in this huge and bustling metropolis, when I am agreeably surprised by a packet from Edinburgh, containing Miss Seward's letter. I am truly happy at the information it communicates respecting the life of Dr. Darwin, who could not have wished his fame and character intrusted to a pen more capable of doing them ample, and, above all, discriminating justice. Biography, the most interesting perhaps of every species of composition, loses all its interest with me, when the shades and lights of the principal character are not accurately and faithfully detailed; nor have I much patience with such exaggerated daubing as Mr. Hayley had bestowed upon poor Cowper. I can no more sympathize with a mere eulogist than I can with a ranting hero upon the stage; and it unfortunately happens that some of our disrespect is apt, rather unjustly, to be transferred to the subject of the panegyric in the one case and to poor Cato in the other. Unapprehensive that even friendship can bias Miss Seward's duty to the public, I shall wait most anxiously for the volume her kindness has promised me.

"As for my third volume, it was very nearly printed when I left Edinburgh, and must, I think, be ready for publication in about a fortnight, when it will have the honour of travelling to Lichfield. I doubt you will find but little amusement in it, as there are a good many old ballads, particularly those of 'the Covenanters,' which, in point of composition, are mere drivelling trash. They are, however, curious in an historical point of view, and have enabled me to slide in a number of notes about that dark and bloody period of Scottish history. There is a vast convenience to an editor in a tale upon which, without the formality of adapting the notes very precisely to the shape and form of the ballad, he may hang on a set like a herald's coat without sleeves, saving himself the trouble of taking measure, and sending forth the tale of ancient time, ready equipped from the Monmouth Street warehouse of a commonplace book. Cadyow Castle is to appear in volume third.

"I proceeded thus far about three weeks ago, and shame to tell, have left my epistle unfinished ever since; yet I have not been wholly idle, about a fortnight of that period having been employed as much to my satisfaction as any similar space of time during my life. I was, the first week of that fortnight, with my invaluable friend George Ellis, and spent the second week at Oxford, which I visited for the first time. I was peculiarly fortunate in having, for my patron at Oxford, Mr. Heber, a particular friend of mine, who is intimately acquainted with all, both animate and inanimate, that is worth knowing at Oxford. The time, though as much as I could possibly spare, has, I find, been too short to convey to me separate and distinct ideas of all the variety of wonders which I saw. My memory only at present furnishes a grand but indistinct picture of towers, and chapels, and oriels, and vaulted halls, and libraries, and paintings. I hope, in a little time, my ideas will develope themselves a little more distinctly, otherwise I shall have profited little by my tour. I was much flattered by the kind reception and notice I met with from some of the most distinguished inhabitants of the halls of Isis, which was more than such a truant to the classic page as myself was entitled to expect at the source of classic learning.

"On my return, I find an apologetic letter from my printer, saying the third volume will be despatched in a day or two. There has been, it seems, a meeting among the printers' devils; also among the paper makers. I never heard of authors *striking work*, as the mechanics call it, until their masters the booksellers should increase their pay; but if such a combination could take place, the revolt would now be general in all branches of literary labour. How much sincere satisfaction would it give me could I conclude this letter (as I once hoped), by saying I should visit Lichfield, and pay my personal respects to my invaluable correspondent, in my way northwards; but, as circumstances render this impossible, I shall depute the poetry of the olden time in the editor's stead. My 'Romance' is not yet finished. I prefer it much to any thing I have done of the kind." . . . .

He was in Edinburgh by the middle of May; and thus returns to his view of Oxford, in a letter to his friend at Sunninghill:—

To George Ellis, Esq., &c. &c.

"Edinburgh, 25th May, 1803.

"My dear Ellis,

". . . . I was equally delighted with that venerable seat of learning, and flattered by the polite attention of Heber's friends. I should have been enchanted to have spent a couple of months among the curious libraries. What stores must be reserved for some painful student to bring forward to the public! Under the guidance and patronage of our good Heber, I saw many of the literary men of his Alma Mater, and found matters infinitely more active in every department than I had the least previous idea of. Since I returned home, my time has been chiefly occupied in professional labours; my truant days spent in London having thrown me a little behind; but now I hope I shall find spare moments to resume Sir Tristrem—and the Lay, which has acquired additional value in my estimation from its pleasing you. How often do Charlotte and I think of the little paradise at Sunninghill and its kind inhabitants; and how often do we regret, like Dives, the gulf which is placed betwixt us and friends, with whom it would give us such pleasure to spend much of our time! It is one of the vilest attributes of the best of all possible worlds, that it contrives to split and separate and subdivide every thing like congenial pursuits and habits, for the paltry purpose, one would think, of diversifying every little spot with a share of its various productions. I don't know why the human and vegetable departments should differ so excessively. Oaks and beeches, and ashes and elms, not to mention cabbages and turnips, are usually arrayed *en masse*; but where do we meet a town of antiquaries, a village of poets, or a hamlet of philosophers? But, instead of fruitless lamentations, we sincerely hope Mrs. Ellis and you will unrivet yourselves from your forest, and see how the hardy blasts of our mountains will suit you for a change of climate. . . . . The new edition of 'Minstrelsy' is published here, but not in London as yet, owing to the embargo on our shipping. An invasion is expected from Flushing, and no measures of any kind taken to prevent or repel it. Yours ever faithfully,

W. Scott."

This letter enclosed a sheet of extracts from Fordun, in Scott's handwriting; the subject being the traditional marriage of one of the old Counts of Anjou with a female demon, by which the Scotch chronicler accounts for all the crimes and misfortunes of the English Plantagenets.

Messrs. Longman's new edition of the first two volumes of the Minstrelsy consisted of 1000 copies—of volume third there were 1500. A complete edition of 1250 copies followed in 1806; a fourth, also of 1250, in 1810; a fifth of 1500 in 1812; a sixth of 500 in 1820; and since then it has been incorporated in various successive editions of Scott's Collected Poetry—to the extent of at least 15,000 copies more. Of the Continental and American editions, I can say nothing, except that they have been very numerous. The book was soon translated into German, Danish, and Swedish; and the structure of those languages being very favourable to the undertaking, the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border has thus become widely naturalized among nations themselves rich in similar treasures of legendary lore. Of the extraordinary accuracy and felicity of the German version of Schubart, Scott has given some specimens in the last edition which he himself superintended—that of 1830.

He speaks, in the Essay to which I have referred, as if the first reception of the Minstrelsy on the south of the Tweed had been cold. "The curiosity of the English," he says, "was not much awakened by poems in the rude garb of antiquity, accompanied with notes referring to the obscure feuds of barbarous clans, of whose very names civilized history was ignorant." In writing those beautiful Introductions of 1830, however, Scott, as I have already had occasion to hint, trusted entirely to his recollection of days long since gone by, and he has accordingly let fall many statements, which we must take with some allowance. His impressions as to the reception of the Minstrelsy were different, when, writing to his brother-in-law, Charles Carpenter, on the 3d March, 1803, for the purpose of introducing Leyden, he said, "I have contrived to turn a very slender portion of literary talents to some account, by a publication of the poetical antiquities of the Border, where the old people had preserved many ballads descriptive of the manners of the country during the wars with England. This trifling collection was so well received by a *discerning public*, that, after receiving about £100 profit for the first edition, which my vanity cannot omit informing you went off in six months, I have sold the copyright for £500 more." This is not the language of disappointment; and though the edition of 1803 did not move off quite so rapidly as the first, and the work did not perhaps attract much notice beyond the more cultivated students of literature, until the Editor's own genius blazed out in full splendour in the Lay, and thus lent general interest to whatever was connected with his name, I suspect there never was much ground for accusing the English public of regarding the Minstrelsy with more coldness than the Scotch—the population of the Border districts themselves being, of course, excepted. Had the sale of the original edition been chiefly Scotch, I doubt whether Messrs. Longman would have so readily offered £500, in those days of the trade a large sum, for the second. Scott had become habituated, long before 1830, to a scale of bookselling transactions, measured by which the largest editions and copy-moneys of his own early days appeared insignificant; but the evidence seems complete that he was well contented at the time.

He certainly had every reason to be so as to the impression which the Minstrelsy made on the minds of those entitled to think for themselves upon such a subject. The ancient ballads in his collection, which had never been printed at all before, were in number forty-three; and of the others—most of which were in fact all but new to the modern reader—it is little to say that his editions were superior in all respects to those that had preceded them. He had, I firmly believe, interpolated hardly a line or even an epithet of his own; but his diligent zeal had put him in possession of a variety of copies in different stages of preservation; and to the task of selecting a standard text among such a diversity of materials, he brought a knowledge of old manners and phraseology, and a manly simplicity of taste, such as had never before been united in the person of a poetical antiquary. From among a hundred corruptions he seized, with instinctive tact, the primitive diction and imagery; and produced strains in which the unbroken energy of half-civilized ages, their stern and deep passions, their daring adventures and cruel tragedies, and even their rude wild humour, are reflected with almost the brightness of a Homeric mirror, interrupted by hardly a blot of what deserves to be called vulgarity, and totally free from any admixture of artificial sentimentalism. As a picture of manners, the Scottish Minstrelsy is not surpassed, if equalled, by any similar body of poetry preserved in any other country; and it unquestionably owes its superiority in this respect over Percy's Reliques to the Editor's conscientious fidelity, on the one hand, which prevented the introduction of any thing new—to his pure taste, on the other, in the balancing of discordant recitations. His introductory essays and notes teemed with curious knowledge, not hastily grasped for the occasion, but gradually gleaned and sifted by the patient labour of years, and presented with an easy, unaffected propriety and elegance of arrangement and expression, which it may be doubted if he ever materially surpassed in the happiest of his imaginative narrations. I well remember, when Waverley was a new book, and all the world were puzzling themselves about its authorship, to have heard the Poet of "the Isle of Palms" exclaim impatiently; "I wonder what all these people are perplexing themselves with: have they forgotten the *prose* of the Minstrelsy?" Even had the Editor inserted none of his own verse, the work would have contained enough, and more than enough, to found a lasting and graceful reputation.

It is not to be denied, however, that The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border has derived a very large accession of interest from the subsequent career of its Editor. One of the critics of that day said that the book contained "the elements of a hundred historical romances;" and this critic was a prophetic one. No person who has not gone through its volumes for the express purpose of comparing their contents with his great original works, can have formed a conception of the endless variety of incidents and images now expanded and emblazoned by his mature art, of which the first hints may be found either in the text of those primitive ballads, or in the notes which the happy rambles of his youth had gathered together for their illustration. In the Minstrelsy published since his death, not a few such instances are pointed out; but the list might have been extended far beyond the limits which such an edition allowed. The taste and fancy of Scott appear to have been formed as early as his moral character; and he had, before he passed the threshold of authorship, assembled about him, in the uncalculating delight of native enthusiasm, almost all the materials on which his genius was destined to be employed for the gratification and instruction of the world.

CHAPTER XII.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EDINBURGH REVIEW—PROGRESS OF THE TRISTREM —AND OF THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL—VISIT OF WORDSWORTH— PUBLICATION OF "SIR TRISTREM."—1803-1804.

Shortly after the complete "Minstrelsy" issued from the press, Scott made his first appearance as a reviewer. The Edinburgh Review had been commenced in October, 1802, under the superintendence of the Rev. Sidney Smith, with whom, during his short residence in Scotland, he had lived on terms of great kindness and familiarity. Mr. Smith soon resigned the editorship to Mr. Jeffrey, who had by this time been for several years among the most valued of Scott's friends and companions at the bar; and, the new journal being far from committing itself to violent politics at the outset, he appreciated the brilliant talents regularly engaged in it far too highly, not to be well pleased with the opportunity of occasionally exercising his pen in its service. His first contribution was, I believe, an article on Southey's Amadis of Gaul, included in the number for October, 1803. Another, on Sibbald's Chronicle of Scottish Poetry, appeared in the same number:—a third, on Godwin's Life of Chaucer; a fourth, on Ellis's Specimens of Ancient English Poetry; and a fifth, on the Life and Works of Chatterton, followed in the course of 1804.*

During the summer of 1803, however, his chief literary labour was still on the "Tristrem;" and I shall presently give some further extracts from his letters to Ellis, which will amply illustrate the spirit in which he continued his researches about the Seer of Ercildoune, and the interruptions which these owed to the prevalent alarm of French invasion. Both as Quartermaster of the Edinburgh Light-horse, and as Sheriff of The Forest, he had a full share of responsibility in the warlike arrangements to which the authorities of Scotland had at length been roused; nor were the duties of his two offices considered as strictly compatible by Francis Lord Napier, then Lord-Lieutenant of Selkirkshire; for I find several letters in which his Lordship complains that the incessant drills and musters of Músselburgh and Portobello prevented the Sheriff from attending county meetings held at Selkirk in the course of this summer and autumn, for the purpose of organizing the trained bands of the Forest, on a scale hitherto unattempted. Lord Napier strongly urges the propriety of his resigning his connexion with the Edinburgh troop, and fixing his summer residence somewhere within the limits of his proper jurisdiction; nay, he goes so far as to hint, that if these suggestions should be neglected, it must be his duty to state the case to the Government. Scott could not be induced (least of all by a threat), while the fears of invasion still prevailed, to resign his place among his old companions of "the voluntary brand;" but he seems to have presently acquiesced in the propriety of the Lord-Lieutenant's advice respecting a removal from Lasswade to Ettrick Forest.

The following extract is from a letter written at Musselburgh, during this summer or autumn:—

"Miss Seward's acceptable favour reaches me in a place, and at a time, of great bustle, as the corps of voluntary cavalry to which I belong is quartered for a short time in this village, for the sake of drilling and discipline. Nevertheless, had your letter announced the name of the gentleman who took the trouble of forwarding it, I would have made it my business to find him out, and to prevail on him, if possible, to spend a day or two with us in quarters. We are here assuming a very military appearance. Three regiments of militia, with a formidable park of artillery, are encamped just by us. The Edinburgh troop, to which I have the honour to be quartermaster, consists entirely of young gentlemen of family, and is, of course, admirably well mounted and armed. There are other four troops in the regiment, consisting of yeomanry, whose iron faces and muscular forms announce the hardness of the climate against which they wrestle, and the powers which nature has given them to contend with and subdue it. These corps have been easily raised in Scotland, the farmers being in general a high-spirited race of men, fond of active exercises, and patient of hardship and fatigue. For myself, I must own that to one who has, like myself, *la tête un peu exaltée*, the pomp and circumstance of war gives, for a time, a very poignant and pleasing sensation. The imposing appearance of cavalry, in particular, and the rush which marks their onset, appear to me to partake highly of the sublime. Perhaps I am the more attached to this sort of sport of swords, because my health requires much active exercise, and a lameness contracted in childhood renders it inconvenient for me to take it otherwise than on horseback. I have, too, a hereditary attachment to the animal —not, I flatter myself, of the common jockey cast, but because I regard him as the kindest and most generous of the subordinate tribes. I hardly even except the dogs; at least they are usually so much better treated, that compassion for the steed should be thrown into the scale when we weigh their comparative merits. My wife (a foreigner) never sees a horse ill used without asking what that poor horse has done in his state of pre-existence? I would fain hope they have been carters or hackney-coachmen, and are only experiencing a retort of the ill-usage they have formerly inflicted. What think you?"

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* Scott's contributions to our periodical literature have been with some trivial exceptions, included in the recent collection of his Miscellaneous Prose Writings.

It appears that Miss Seward had sent Scott some obscure magazine criticism on his "Minstrelsy," in which the censor had condemned some phrase as naturally suggesting a low idea. The lady's letter not having been preserved, I cannot explain farther the sequel of that from which I have been quoting. Scott says, however:-

"I am infinitely amused with your sagacious critic. God wot I have often admired the vulgar subtlety of such minds as can with a depraved ingenuity attach a mean or disgusting sense to an epithet capable of being otherwise understood, and more frequently, perhaps, used to express an elevated idea. In many parts of Scotland the word *virtue* is limited entirely to *industry;* and a young divine who preached upon the moral beauties of virtue was considerably surprised at learning that the whole discourse was supposed to be a panegyric upon a particular damsel who could spin fourteen spindles of yarn in the course of a week. This was natural; but your literary critic has the merit of going very far a-field to fetch home his degrading association."

To return to the correspondence with Ellis—Scott writes thus to him in July:—"I cannot pretend immediately to enter upon the serious discussion which you propose respecting the age of 'Sir Tristrem;' but yet, as it seems likely to strip Thomas the Prophet of the honours due to the author of the English 'Tristrem,' I cannot help hesitating before I can agree to your theory;—and here my doubt lies. Thomas of Ercildoune, called the Rhymer, is a character mentioned by almost every Scottish historian, and the date of whose existence is almost as well known as if we had the parish register. Now, his great reputation, and his designation of *Rymour*, could only be derived from his poetical performances; and in what did these consist excepting in the romance of 'Sir Tristrem,' mentioned by Robert de Brunne? I hardly think, therefore, we shall be justified in assuming the existence of an earlier *Thomas*, who would be, in fact, merely the creature of our system. I own I am not prepared to take this step, if I can escape otherwise from you and M. de la Ravaillere—and thus I will try it. M. de la R. barely informs us that the history of Sir Tristrem was known to Chretien de Troyes in the end of the twelfth century, and to the King of Navarre in the beginning of the thirteenth. Thus far his evidence goes, and I think not one inch farther—for it does not establish the existence either of the metrical romance, as you suppose, or of the prose romance, as M. de la R. much more erroneously supposes, at that very early period. If the *story* of 'Sir Tristrem' was founded in fact, and if, which I have all along thought, a person of this name really swallowed a dose of cantharides intended to stimulate the exertions of his uncle, a petty monarch of Cornwall, and involved himself of course in an intrigue with his aunt, these facts must have taken place during a very early period of English history, perhaps about the time of the Heptarchy. Now, if this be once admitted, it is clear that the raw material from which Thomas wove his web, must have been current long before his day, and I am inclined to think that Chretien and the King of Navarre refer not to the special metrical romance contained in Mr. Douce's fragments, but to the general story of 'Sir Tristrem,' whose love and misfortunes were handed down by tradition as a historical fact. There is no difficulty in supposing a tale of this kind to have passed from the Armoricans, or otherwise, into the mouths of the French, as, on the other hand, it seems to have been preserved among the Celtic tribes of the Border, from whom, in all probability, it was taken by their neighbour, Thomas of Ercildoune. If we suppose, therefore, that Chretien and the King allude only to the general and well-known *story* of Tristrem, and not to the particular edition of which Mr. Douce has some fragments—(and I see no evidence that any such special allusion to these fragments is made)—it will follow that *they* may be as late as the end of the thirteenth century, and that the Thomas mentioned in them may be *the* Thomas of whose existence we have historical evidence. In short, the question is, shall Thomas be considered as a landmark by which to ascertain the antiquity of the fragments, or shall the *supposed* antiquity of the fragments be held a sufficient reason for *supposing* an earlier Thomas? For aught yet seen, I incline to my former opinion, that those fragments are coeval with the *ipsissimus Thomas.* I acknowledge the internal evidence, of which you are so accurate a judge, weighs more with me than the reference to the King of Navarre; but after all, the extreme difficulty of judging of style, so as to bring us within sixty or seventy years, must be fully considered. Take notice, I have never pleaded the matter so high as to say, that the Auchinleck MS. contains the very words devised by Thomas the Rhymer. On the contrary, I have always thought it one of the spurious copies in *queint Inglis,* of which Robert de Brunne so heavily complains. But this will take little from the curiosity, perhaps little from the antiquity, of the romance. Enough of Sir T. for the present.—How happy it will make us if you can fulfil the expectation you hold out of a northern expedition! Whether in the cottage or at Edinburgh, we will be equally happy to receive you and show you all the lions of our vicinity. Charlotte is hunting out music for Mrs. E., but I intend to add *Johnson's* collection, which, though the tunes are simple, and often bad sets, contains much more original Scotch music than any other."

About this time, Mr. and Mrs. Ellis, and their friend Douce, were preparing for a tour into the North of England; and Scott was invited and strongly tempted to join them at various points of their progress, particularly at the Grange, near Rotherham, in Yorkshire, a seat of the Earl of Effingham. But he found it impossible to escape again from Scotland, owing to the agitated state of the country.—On returning to the Cottage from an excursion to his Sheriffship, he thus resumes:—

To George Ellis, Esq.

"Lasswade, August 27, 1803.

"Dear Ellis,

"My conscience has been thumping me as hard as if it had studied under Mendoza, for letting your kind favour remain so long unanswered. Nevertheless, in this it is like Launcelot Gobbo's, but a hard kind of conscience, as it must know how much I have been occupied with Armies of Reserve, and Militia, and Pikemen, and Sharpshooters, who are to descend from Ettrick Forest to the confusion of all invaders. The truth is, that this country has for once experienced that the pressure of external danger may possibly produce internal unanimity; and so great is the present military zeal, that I really wish our rulers would devise some way of calling it into action, were it only on the economical principle of saving so much good courage from idle evaporation.—I am interrupted by an extraordinary accident, nothing less than a volley of small-shot fired through the window, at which my wife was five minutes before arranging her flowers. By Camp's assistance, who run the culprit's foot like a Liddesdale bloodhound, we detected an unlucky sportsman, whose awkwardness and rashness might have occasioned very serious mischief—so much for interruption.—To return to Sir Tristrem. As for Thomas's *name*, respecting which you state some doubts,[*] I request you to attend to the following particulars:—In the first place, surnames were of very late introduction into Scotland, and it would be difficult to show that they became in general a hereditary distinction, until after the time of Thomas the Rhymer; previously they were mere personal distinctions peculiar to the person by whom they were borne, and dying along with him. Thus the children of *Alan Durward* were not called *Durward*, because they were not *Ostiarii*, the circumstance from which he derived the name. When the surname was derived from property, it became naturally hereditary at a more early period, because the distinction applied equally to the father and the son. The same happened with *patronymics*, both because the name of the father is usually given to the son; so that Walter Fitzwalter would have been my son's name in those times as well as my own; and also because a clan often takes a sort of general patronymic from one common ancestor, as Macdonald, &c. &c. But though these classes of surnames become hereditary at an early period, yet, in the natural course of things, epithets merely personal are much longer of becoming a family distinction.[†] But I do not trust, by any means, to this general argument; because the charter quoted in the Minstrelsy contains written evidence, that the epithet of *Rymour* was peculiar to our Thomas, and was dropped by his son, who designs himself simply, *Thomas of Erceldoune, son of Thomas the Rymour of Erceldoune*; which I think is conclusive upon the subject. In all this discussion, I have scorned to avail myself of the tradition of the country, as well as the suspicious testimony of Boece, Dempster, &c., grounded probably upon that tradition, which uniformly affirms the name of Thomas to have been Learmont or Leirmont, and that of the Rhymer a personal epithet. This circumstance may induce us, however, to conclude that some of his descendants had taken that name—certain it is that his castle is called Leirmont's Tower, and that he is as well known to the country people by that name, as by the appellation of the Rhymer.

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[*] Mr. Ellis had hinted that "*Rymer* might not more necessarily indicate an actual poet, than the name of *Taylor* does in modern times an actual knight of the thimble."

[†] The whole of this subject has derived much illustration from the recent edition of the "Ragman's Roll," a contribution to the Bannatyne Club of Edinburgh by two of Sir Walter Scott's most esteemed friends, the Lord Chief Commissioner Adam and Sir Samuel Shepherd. That record of the oaths of fealty tendered to Edward I., during his Scotch usurpation, furnishes, indeed, very strong confirmation of the views which the Editor of "Sir Tristrem" had thus early adopted concerning the origin of surnames in Scotland. The landed gentry, over most of the country, seem to have been then generally distinguished by the surnames still borne by their descendants—it is wonderful how little the land seems to have changed hands in the course of so many centuries. But the towns' people have, with few exceptions, designations apparently indicating the actual trade of the individual; and, in many instances, there is distinct evidence that the plan of transmitting such names had not been adopted; for example, Thomas the Tailor is described as son of Thomas the Smith, or *vice versâ*. The chief magistrates of the burghs appear, however, to have been, in most cases, younger sons of the neighbouring gentry, and have of course their hereditary designations. This singular document, so often quoted and referred to, was never before printed *in extenso*.

"Having cleared up this matter, as I think, to every one's satisfaction, unless to those resembling not Thomas himself, but his namesake the Apostle, I have, secondly, to show that my Thomas is the *Tomas* of Douce's MS. Here I must again refer to the high and general reverence in which Thomas appears to have been held, as is proved by Robert de Brunne; but above all, as you observe, to the extreme similarity betwixt the French and English poems, with this strong circumstance, that the *mode* of telling the story approved by the French minstrel, under the authority of his Tomas, is the very mode in which my Thomas has told it. Would you desire better sympathy?

"I lately met by accident a Cornish gentleman, who had taken up his abode in Selkirkshire for the sake of fishing—and what should his name be but *Caerlion?* You will not doubt that this interested me very much. He tells me that there is but one family of the name in Cornwall, or as far as ever he heard any where else, and that they are of great antiquity. Does not this circumstance seem to prove that there existed in Cornwall a place called Caerlion, giving name to that family? Caerlion would probably be *Castrum Leonense*, the chief town of Liones, which in every romance is stated to have been Tristrem's country, and from which he derived his surname of Tristrem *de Liones*. This district, as you notice in the notes on the *Fabliaux*, was swallowed up by the sea. I need not remind you that all this tends to illustrate the *Caerlioun* mentioned by Tomas, which I always suspected to be a very different place from Caerlion on Uske—which is no seaport. How I regret the number of leagues which prevented my joining you and the sapient Douce, and how much ancient lore I have lost! Where I have been, the people talked more of the praises of Ryno and Fillan (not Ossian's heroes, but two Forest greyhounds which I got in a present) than, I verily believe, they would have done of the prowesses of Sir Tristrem, or of Esplandian, had either of them appeared to lead on the levy *en masse*. Yours ever,

W. Scott."

Ellis says in reply:—

"My dear Scott, I must begin by congratulating you on Mrs. Scott's escape; Camp, if he had had no previous title to immortality, would deserve it, for his zeal and address in detecting the stupid marksman, who, while he took aim at a bird on a tree, was so near shooting your fair 'bird in bower.' If there were many such shooters, it would become then a sufficient excuse for the reluctance of Government to furnish arms indifferently to all volunteers. In the next place, I am glad to hear that you are disposed to adopt my channel for transmitting the tale of Tristrem to Chretien de Troye. The more I have thought on the subject the more I am convinced that the Normans, long before the Conquest, had acquired from the Britons of Armorica a considerable knowledge of our old British fables, and that this led them, after the Conquest, to enquire after such accounts as were to be found in the country where the events are supposed to have taken place. I am satisfied, from the internal evidence of Geoffrey of Monmouth's History, that it must have been fabricated in Bretagne, and that he did, as he asserts, only *translate* it. Now, as *Marie*, who lived about a century later, *certainly* translated also from the Breton a series of lays relating to Arthur and his knights, it will follow that the first poets who wrote *in France*, such as Chretien, &c., must have acquired their knowledge of our traditions from Bretagne. Observe, that the pseudo-Turpin, who is supposed to have been anterior to Geoffrey, and who, on that supposition, cannot have borrowed from him, mentions, among Charlemagne's heroes, Hoel (the hero of Geoffrey also), 'de quo canitur cantilena usque ad hodiernum diem.' Now, if Thomas was able to establish his story as the most *authentic*, even by the avowal of the French themselves, and if the *sketch* of that story was previously known, it must have been because he wrote in the country which his hero was supposed to have inhabited; and on the same grounds the Norman minstrels here, and even their English successors, were allowed to fill up with as many circumstances as they thought proper the tales of which the Armorican Bretons probably furnished the first imperfect outline.

"What you tell me about your Cornish fisherman is very curious; and I think with you that little reliance is to be placed on our Welsh geography—and that Caerlion on Uske is by no means *the* Caerlion of Tristrem. Few writers or readers have hitherto considered sufficiently that from the moment when Hengist first obtained a settlement in the Isle of Thanet, that settlement became *England*, and all the rest of the country became *Wales;* that these divisions continued to represent different proportions of the island at different periods; but that Wales, during the whole Heptarchy, and for a long time after, comprehended the whole western coast very nearly from Cornwall to Dunbretton; and that this whole tract, of which the eastern frontier may be easily traced for each particular period, preserved most probably to the age of Thomas a community of language, of manners, and traditions.

"As your last volume announces your *Lay*, as well as *Sir Tristrem*, as *in the press*, I begin, in common with all your friends, to be uneasy about the future disposal of your time. Having nothing but a very active profession, and your military pursuits, and your domestic occupations to think of, and Leyden having monopolized Asiatic lore, you will presently be quite an idle man! You are, however, still in time to learn Erse, and it is, I am afraid, very necessary that you should do so, in order to stimulate my laziness, which has hitherto made no progress whatever in Welsh. Your ever faithful, G. E.

"P. S.—*Is Camp married yet?*"

Ellis had projected some time before this an edition of the Welsh *Mabinogion*, in which he was to be assisted by Mr. Owen, the author of the "Welsh and English Dictionary," "Cambrian Biography," &c.

"I am very sorry," Scott says (September 14), "that you flag over those wild and interesting tales. I hope, if you will not work yourself (for which you have so little excuse, having both the golden talents and the golden leisure necessary for study), you will at least keep Owen to something that is rational—I mean to *iron horses*, and *magic cauldrons*, and *Bran the Blessed*, with the music of his whole army upon his shoulders, and, in short, to something more pleasing and profitable than old apophthegms, triads, and 'blessed burdens of the womb of the isle of Britain.' Talking of such burdens, Camp has been regularly wedded to a fair dame in the neighbourhood, but notwithstanding the Italian policy of locking the lady in a stable, she is suspected of some inaccuracy; but we suspend judgment, as Othello ought in all reason to have done, till we see the produce of the union. As for my own employment, I have yet much before me, and as the beginning of letting out ink is like the letting out of water, I daresay I shall go on scribbling one nonsense or another to the end of the chapter. People may say this and that of the pleasure of fame or of profit as a motive of writing. I think the only pleasure is in the actual exertion and research, and I would no more write upon any other terms than I would hunt merely to dine upon hare soup. At the same time, if credit and profit came unlooked for, I would no more quarrel with them than with the soup. I hope this will find you and Mrs. Ellis safely and pleasantly settled

'In Yorkshire, near fair Rotherham,'

"—By the way, while you are in his neighbourhood, I hope you will not fail to enquire into the history of the valiant 'Moor of Moorhall and the Dragon of Wantley.' As a noted burlesque upon the popular romance, the ballad has some curiosity and merit. Ever yours, W. S."

Mr. Ellis received this letter where Scott hoped it would reach him, at the seat of Lord Effingham; and he answers, on the 3d of October:—

"The beauty of this part of the country is such as to indemnify the traveller for a few miles of very indifferent road, and the tedious process of creeping up and almost sliding down a succession of high hills; and in the number of picturesque landscapes by which we are encompassed, the den of the dragon which you recommended to our attention is the most superlatively beautiful and romantic. You are, I suppose, aware that this same den is the very spot from whence Lady Mary Wortley Montague wrote many of her early letters; and it seems that an old housekeeper, who lived there till last year, remembered to have seen her, and dwelt with great pleasure on the various charms of her celebrated mistress; so that its wild scenes have an equal claim to veneration from the admirers of wit and gallantry, and the far-famed investigators of remote antiquity. With regard to the original dragon, I have met with two different traditions. One of these (which I think is preserved by Percy) states him to have been a wicked attorney, a relentless persecutor of the poor, who was at length, fortunately for his neighbours, ruined by a law-suit which he had undertaken against his worthy and powerful antagonist Moor of Moorhall. The other legend, which is current in the Wortley family, states him to have been a most formidable drinker, whose powers of ingurgitation, strength of stomach, and stability of head, had procured him a long series of triumphs over common visitants, but who was at length fairly drunk dead by the chieftain of the opposite moors. It must be confessed that the form of the den, a cavern cut in the rock, and very nearly resembling a wine or ale cellar, tends to corroborate this tradition; but I am rather tempted to believe that both the stories were invented *apres coup*, and that the supposed dragon was some wolf or other destructive animal, who was finally hunted down by Moor of Moorhall, after doing considerable mischief to the flocks and herds of his superstitious neighbours.

The present house appears to have grown to its even now moderate size by successive additions to a very small *logge* (lodge), built by 'a gentle knight, Sir Thomas Wortley,' in the time of Henry VIII., for the pleasure, as an old inscription in the present scullery testifies, of 'listening to the Hartes bell.' Its site is on the side of a very high rocky hill, covered with oaks (the weed of the country), and overhanging the river Don, which in this place is little more than a mountain torrent, though it becomes navigable a few miles lower at Sheffield. A great part of the road from hence (which is seven miles distant) runs through forest ground, and I have no doubt that the whole was at no distant period covered with wood, because the modern improvements of the country, the result of flourishing manufactories, have been carried on almost within our own time in consequence of the abundance of coal which here breaks out in many places even on the surface. On the opposite side of the river begin almost immediately the extensive moors which strike along the highest land of Yorkshire and Derbyshire, and following the chain of hills, probably communicated not many centuries ago with those of Northumberland, Cumberland, and Scotland. I therefore doubt whether the general face of the country is not better evidence as to the nature of the monster than the particular appearance of the cavern; and am inclined to believe that Moor of Moorhall was a hunter of wild-beasts, rather than of attorneys or hard-drinkers.

"You are unjust in saying that I flag over the Mabinogion—I have been very constantly employed upon my preface, and was proceeding to the last section when I set off for this place—so you see I am perfectly exculpated, and all over as white as snow. Anne being a true aristocrat, and considering purity of blood as essential to lay the foundation of all the virtues she expects to call out by a laborious education of a true son of Camp—she highly approves the strict and even prudish severity with which you watch over the morals of his bride, and expects you, inasmuch as all the good knights she has read of have been remarkable for their incomparable beauty, not to neglect that important requisite in selecting her future guardian. We possess a vulgar dog (a pointer), to whom it is intended to commit the charge of our house during our absence, and to whom I mean to give orders to repel by force any attempts of our neighbours during the time that I shall be occupied in preparing *hare-soup;* but Fitz-camp will be *her* companion, and she trusts that you will strictly examine him while yet a varlet, and only send him up when you think him likely to become a true knight *Adieu—mille choses,*

G. E."

Scott tells Ellis in reply (October 14), that he was "infinitely gratified with his account of Wortley Lodge and the Dragon," and refers him to the article "Kempion," in the Minstrelsy for a similar tradition respecting an ancestor of the noble house of Somerville. The reader can hardly need to be reminded that the gentle knight Sir Thomas Wortley's love of hearing the deer *bell*, was often alluded to in Scott's subsequent writings. He goes on to express his hope, that next summer will be "a more propitious season for a visit to Scotland."

"The necessity of the present occasion," he says, "has kept almost every individual, however insignificant, to his post. God has left us entirely to our own means of defence, for we have not above one regiment of the line in all our ancient kingdom. In the mean while, we are doing the best we can to prepare ourselves for a contest, which, perhaps, is not far distant. A beacon light, communicating with that of Edinburgh Castle, is just erecting in front of our quiet cottage. My field equipage is ready, and I want nothing but a pipe and a *schnurbartchen* to convert me into a complete hussar.* Charlotte, with the infantry (of the household troops, I mean), is to beat her retreat into Ettrick Forest, where, if the Tweed is in his usual wintry state of flood, she may weather out a descent from Ostend. Next year I hope all this will be over, and that not only I shall have the pleasure of receiving you in peace and quiet, but also of going with you through every part of Caledonia, in which you can possibly be interested. Friday se'ennight our corps takes the field for ten days—for the second time within three months—which may explain the military turn of my epistle.

"Poor Ritson is no more. All his vegetable soups and puddings have not been able to avert the evil day, which, I understand, was preceded by madness. It must be worth while to enquire who has got his MSS.—I mean his own notes and writings. The 'Life of Arthur,' for example, must contain many curious facts and quotations, which the poor defunct had the power of assembling to an astonishing degree, without being able to combine any thing like a narrative, or even to deduce one useful inference—witness his 'Essay on Romance and Minstrelsy,' which reminds one of a heap of rubbish, which had either turned out unfit for the architect's purpose, or beyond his skill to make use of. The ballads he had collected in Cumberland and Northumberland, too, would greatly interest me. If they have fallen into the hands of any liberal collector, I dare say I might be indulged with a sight of them. Pray enquire about this matter.

"Yesterday Charlotte and I had a visit which we owe to Mrs. E. A rosy lass, the sister of a bold yeoman in our neighbourhood, entered our cottage, towing in a monstrous sort of bulldog, called emphatically Cerberus, whom she came on the part of her brother to beg our acceptance of, understanding we were anxious to have a son of Camp. Cerberus was no sooner loose (a pleasure which, I suspect, he had rarely enjoyed) than his father (*suppose*) and he engaged in a battle which might have been celebrated by the author of the 'Unnatural Combat,' and which, for aught I know, might have turned out a combat *à l' outrance*, if I had not interfered with a horsewhip, instead of a baton, as *juge de Camp*. The odds were indeed greatly against the stranger knight—two fierce Forest grey-hounds having arrived, and, contrary to the law of arms, stoutly assailed him. I hope to send you a puppy instead of this redoubtable Cerberus. Love to Mrs. E.—W. S."

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* *Schnurbartchen* is German for mustachio. It appears from a page of an early notebook previously transcribed, that Scott had been sometimes a smoker of tobacco in the first days of his light-horsemanship. He had laid aside the habit at the time when this letter was written; but he twice again resumed it, though he never carried the indulgence to any excess.

After giving Scott some information about Ritson's literary treasures, most of which, it has turned out, had been disposed of by auction shortly before his death, Mr. Ellis, (10th November) returns to the charge about Tristrem and True Thomas. "You appear," he says, "to have been for some time so military that I am afraid the most difficult and important part of your original plan, viz., your History of Scottish Poetry, will again be postponed, and must be kept for some future publication. I am, at this moment, much in want of two such assistants as you and Leyden. It seems to me that if I had some local knowledge of that wicked Ettrick Forest, I could extricate myself tolerably—but as it is, although I am convinced that my general idea is tolerably just, I am unable to guide my elephants in that quiet and decorous step-by-step march which the nature of such animals requires through a country of which I don't know any of the roads. My comfort is, that you cannot publish Tristrem without a preface,—that you can't write one without giving me some assistance,—and that you must finish the said preface long before I go to press with my Introduction."

This was the Introduction to Ellis's "Specimens of ancient English Romances," in which he intended to prove that as Valentia was, during several ages, the exposed frontier of Roman Britain towards the unsubdued tribes of the North, and as two whole legions were accordingly usually quartered there, while one besides sufficed for the whole southern part of the island, the manners of Valentia, which included the district of Ettrick Forest, must have been greatly favoured by the continued residence of so many Roman troops. "It is probable therefore," he says, in another letter, "that the civilisation of the northern part became gradually the most perfect. That country gave birth, as you have observed, to Merlin, and to Aneurin, who was probably the same as the historian Gildas. It seems to have given education to Taliessin—it was the country of Bede and Adonnan."

I shall not quote more on this subject, as the reader may turn to the published essay of Mr. Ellis's matured opinions respecting it. To return to this letter of November 10th, 1803, he proceeds—"And now let me ask you about the Lay of the Last Minstrel. That, I think, may go on as well in your tent, amidst the clang of trumpets and the dust of the field, as in your quiet cottage—perhaps indeed still better—nay, I am not sure whether a *real* invasion would not be, as far as your poetry is concerned, a thing to be wished."

It was in the September of this year that Scott first saw Wordsworth. Their mutual acquaintance, Stoddart, had so often talked of them to each other, that they met as if they had not been strangers; and they parted friends.

Mr. and Miss Wordsworth had just completed that tour in the Highlands, of which so many incidents have since been immortalized, both in the poet's verse and in the hardly less poetical prose of his sister's Diary. On the morning of the 17th of September, having left their carriage at Rosslyn, they walked down the valley to Lasswade, and arrived there before Mr. and Mrs. Scott had risen. "We were received," Mr. Wordsworth has told me, "with that frank cordiality which, under whatever circumstances I afterwards met him, always marked his manners; and, indeed, I found him then in every respect—except, perhaps, that his animal spirits were somewhat higher—precisely the same man that you knew him in latter life; the same lively, entertaining conversation, full of anecdote, and averse from disquisition; the same cheerful and benevolent and hopeful views of man and the world. He partly read and partly recited, sometimes in an enthusiastic style of chant, the first four cantos of the Lay of the Last Minstrel; and the novelty of manners, the clear picturesque descriptions, and the easy glowing energy of much of the verse, greatly delighted me."

After this he walked with the tourists to Rosslyn, and promised to meet them in two days at Melrose. The night before they reached Melrose they slept at the little quiet inn of Clovenford, where, on mentioning his name, they were received with all sorts of attention and kindness,—the landlady observing that Mr. Scott, "who was a very clever gentleman," was an old friend of the house, and usually spent a good deal of time there during the fishing season; but, indeed, says Mr. Wordsworth, "wherever we named him, we found the word acted as an *open sesamum;* and I believe, that in the character of the *Sheriff's* friends, we might have counted on a hearty welcome under any roof in the Border country.

He met them at Melrose on the 19th, and escorted them through the Abbey, pointing out all its beauties, and pouring out his rich stores of history and tradition. They then dined and spent the evening together at the inn; but Miss Wordsworth observed that there was some difficulty about arranging matters for the night, "the landlady refusing to settle any thing until she had ascertained from *the Sheriff himself* that he had no objection to sleep in the same room with *William.*" Scott was thus far on his way to the Circuit Court at Jedburgh, in the capacity of Sheriff, and there his new friends again joined him; but he begged that they would not enter the court, "for," said he, "I really would not like you to see the sort of figure I cut there." They did see him casually, however, in his cocked hat and sword, marching in the Judge's procession to the sound of one cracked trumpet, and were then not surprised that he should have been a little ashamed of the whole ceremonial. He introduced to them his friend William Laidlaw, who was attending the court as a juryman, and who, having read some of Wordsworth's verses in a newspaper, was exceedingly anxious to be of the party, when they explored at leisure, all the law-business being over, the beautiful valley of the Jed, and the ruins of the Castle of Ferniehirst, the original fastness of the noble family of Lothian. The grove of stately ancient elms about and below the ruin was seen to great advantage in a fine, grey, breezy autumnal afternoon; and Mr. Wordsworth happened to say, "What life there is in trees!"—"How different," said Scott, "was the feeling of a very intelligent young lady, born and bred in the Orkney Islands, who lately came to spend a season in this neighbourhood! She told me nothing in the mainland scenery had so much disappointed her as woods and trees. She found them so dead and lifeless, that she could never help pining after the eternal motion and variety of the ocean. And so back she has gone, and I believe nothing will ever tempt her from *the wind-swept Orcades* again.

Next day they all proceeded together up the Teviot to Hawick, Scott entertaining his friends with some legend or ballad connected with every tower or rock they passed. He made them stop for a little to admire particularly a scene of deep and solemn retirement, called *Horne's Pool*, from its having been the daily haunt of a contemplative schoolmaster, known to him in his youth; and at Kirkton, he pointed out the little village schoolhouse, to which his friend Leyden had walked six or eight miles every day across the moors "when a poor barefooted boy." From Hawick, where they spent the night, he led them next morning to the brow of a hill, from which they could see a wide range of the Border mountains, Ruberslaw, the Carter, and the Cheviots; and lamented that neither their engagements nor his own would permit them to make at this time an excursion into the wilder glens of Liddesdale, "where," said he, "I have strolled so often and so long, that I may say I have a home in every farm-house." "And, indeed," adds Mr. Wordsworth, "wherever we went with him, he seemed to know every body, and every body to know and like him." Here they parted—the Wordsworths to pursue their journey homeward by Eskdale—he to return to Lasswade.

The impression on Mr. Wordsworth's mind was, that on the whole he attached much less importance to his literary labours or reputation than to his bodily sports, exercises, and social amusements; and yet he spoke of his profession as if he had already given up almost all hope of rising by it; and some allusion being made to its profits, observed that "he was sure he could, if he chose, get more money than he should ever wish to have from the booksellers."*

This confidence in his own literary resources appeared to Mr. Wordsworth remarkable — the more so, from the careless way in which its expression dropt from him. As to his despondence concerning the bar, I confess his *fee-book* indicates much less ground for such a feeling than I should have expected to discover there. His practice brought him, as we have seen, in the session of 1796–7, £144, 10s.: its proceeds fell down, in the first year of his married life, to £79, 17s.; but they rose again, in 1798–9, to £135, 9s.; amounted, in 1799–1800, to £129, 13s.—in 1800–1, to £170—in 1801–2, to £202, 12s.—and in session that had just elapsed (which is the last included in the record before me), to £228, 18s.

On reaching his cottage in Westmoreland, Wordsworth addressed a letter to Scott, from which I must quote a few sentences. It is dated Grasmere, October 16, 1803.

> "We had a delightful journey home, delightful weather, and a sweet country to travel through. We reached our little cottage in high spirits, and thankful to God for all his bounties. My wife and child were both well, and as I need not say, we had all of us a happy meeting. . . . . We passed Branxholme—your Branxholme, we supposed—about four miles on this side of Hawick. It looks better in your poem than in its present realities. The situation, however, is delightful, and makes amends for an ordinary mansion. The whole of the Teviot and the pastoral steeps about Mosspaul pleased us exceedingly. The Esk below Langholme is a delicious river, and we saw it to great advantage. We did not omit noticing Johnnie Arm-

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* I have drawn up the account of this meeting from my recollection partly of Mr. Wordsworth's conversation—partly from that of his sister's charming "Diary," which he was so kind as to read over to me on the 16th May, 1836.

strong's keep; but his hanging place, to our great regret, we missed. We were, indeed, most truly sorry that we could not have you along with us into Westmoreland. The country was in its full glory—the verdure of the valleys, in which we are so much superior to you in Scotland, but little tarnished by the weather, and the trees putting on their most beautiful looks. My sister was quite enchanted, and we often said to each other, what a pity Mr. Scott is not with us! . . . I had the pleasure of seeing Coleridge and Southey at Keswick last Sunday. Southey, whom I never saw much of before, I liked much: he is very pleasant in his manner, and a man of great reading in old books, poetry, chronicles, memoirs, &c. &c., particularly Spanish and Portuguese. . . . . My sister and I often talk of the happy days that we spent in your company. Such things do not occur often in life. If we live, we shall meet again; that is my consolation when I think of these things. Scotland and England sound like division, do what ye can; but we really are but neighbours, and if you were no farther off, and in Yorkshire, we should think so. Farewell. God prosper you, and all that belongs to you. Your sincere friend, for such I will call myself, though slow to use a word of such solemn meaning to any one,

W. Wordsworth."

The poet then transcribes his noble sonnet on Neidpath Castle, of which Scott had, it seems, requested a copy. In the MS. it stands somewhat differently from the printed edition; but in that original shape Scott always recited it, and few lines in the language were more frequently in his mouth.

I have already said something of the beginning of Scott's acquaintance with "the Ettrick Shepherd." Shortly after their first meeting, Hogg, coming into Edinburgh with a flock of sheep, was seized with a sudden ambition of seeing his name in print, and he wrote out that same night "Willie and Katie," and a few other ballads, already famous in the Forest, which some obscure bookseller gratified him by putting forth accordingly; but they appear to have attracted no notice beyond their original sphere. Hogg then made an excursion into the Highlands, in quest of employment as overseer of some extensive sheep-farm; but, though Scott had furnished him with strong recommendations to various friends, he returned without success. He printed an account of his travels, however, in a set of letters in the Scots Magazine, which, though exceedingly rugged and uncouth, had abundant traces of the native shrewdness and genuine poetical feeling of this remarkable man. These also failed to excite attention; but, undeterred by such disappointments, the Shepherd no sooner read the third volume of the "Minstrelsy," than he made up his mind that the Editor's "Imitations of the Ancients" were by no means what they should have been. "Immediately," he says, in one of his many Memoirs of himself, "I chose a number of traditional facts, and set about imitating the manner of the Ancients myself." These imitations he transmitted to Scott, who warmly praised the many striking beauties scattered over their rough surface. The next time that Hogg's business carried him to Edinburgh, he waited upon Scott, who invited him to dinner in Castle Street, in company with William Laidlaw, who happened also to be in town, and some other admirers of the rustic genius. When Hogg entered the drawing-room, Mrs. Scott, being at the time in a delicate state of health, was reclining on a sofa. The Shepherd, after being presented, and making his best bow, forthwith took possession of another sofa placed opposite to hers, and stretched himself thereupon at all his length; for, as he said afterwards, "I thought I could never do wrong to copy the lady of the house." As his dress at this period was precisely that in which any ordinary herdsman attends cattle to the market, and as his hands, moreover, bore most legible marks of a recent sheep-smearing, the lady of the house did not observe with perfect equanimity the novel usage to which her chintz was exposed. The Shepherd, however, remarked nothing of all this—dined heartily and drank freely, and, by jest, anecdote, and song, afforded plentiful merriment to the more civilized part of the company. As the liquor operated, his familiarity increased and strengthened; from "Mr. Scott," he advanced to "Sherra," and thence to "Scott," "Walter," and "Wattie," until, at supper, he fairly convulsed the whole party by addressing Mrs. Scott as "Charlotte."

The collection entitled "The Mountain Bard" was eventually published by Constable, in consequence of Scott's recommendation, and this work did at last afford Hogg no slender share of the popular reputation for which he had so long thirsted. It is not my business, however, to pursue the details of his story. What I have written was only to render intelligible the following letter:—

To Walter Scott, Esq. Advocate, Castle Street, Edinburgh.

"Ettrick-house, December 24, 1803.

"Dear Mr. Scott,

"I have been very impatient to hear from you. There is a certain affair of which you and I talked a little in private, and which must now be concluded, that naturally increaseth this.

"I am afraid that I was at least half-seas-over the night I was with you, for I cannot, for my life, recollect what passed when it was late; and, there being certainly a small vacuum in my brain, which, when empty, is quite empty, but is sometimes supplied with a small distillation of intellectual matter—this must have been empty that night, or it never could have been taken possession of by the fumes of the liquor so easily. If I was in the state in which I suspect that I was, I must have spoke a very great deal of nonsense, for which I beg ten thousand pardons. I have the consolation, however, of remembering that Mrs. Scott kept in company all or most of the time, which she certainly could not have done, had I been very rude. I remember, too, of the filial injunction you gave at parting, cautioning me against being ensnared by the loose women in town. I am sure I had not reason enough left at that time to express either the half of my gratitude for the kind hint, or the utter abhorrence I inherit at those seminaries of lewdness.

"You once promised me your best advice in the first lawsuit in which I had the particular happiness of being engaged. I am now going to ask it seriously in an affair, in which, I am sure, we will both take as much pleasure. It is this:—I have as many songs beside me, which are certainly the *worst* of my productions, as will make about one hundred pages close printed, and about two hundred, printed as the Minstrelsy is. Now, although I will not proceed without your consent and advice, yet I would have you to understand that I expect it, and have the scheme much at heart at present. The first thing that suggested it, was their extraordinary repute in Ettrick and its neighbourhood, and being everlastingly plagued with writing copies, and promising scores which I never meant to perform. As my last pamphlet was never known, save to a few friends, I wish your advice what pieces of it are worth preserving. The 'Pastoral' I am resolved to insert, as I am 'Sandy Tod.' As to my manuscripts, they are endless; and as I doubt you will disapprove of publishing them wholesale, and letting the good help off the bad, I think you must trust to my discretion in the selection of a few. I wish likewise to know if you think a graven image on the first leaf is any recommendation; and if we might front the songs with a letter to you, giving an impartial account of my manner of

> life and education, and, which if you pleased to transcribe, putting He for I. Again, there is no publishing a book without a patron, and I have one or two in my eye, and of which I will, with my wonted assurance to you, give you the most free choice. The first is Walter Scott, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff-depute of Ettrick Forest, which, if permitted, I will address you in a dedication singular enough. The next is Lady Dalkeith, which, if you approved of, you must become the Editor yourself; and I shall give you my word for it, that neither word nor sentiment in it shall offend the most delicate ear. You will not be in the least jealous, if, alongst with my services to you, I present my kindest compliments to the sweet little lady whom you call Charlotte. As for Camp and Walter, (I beg pardon for this pre-eminence), they will not mind them if I should exhaust my eloquence in compliments. Believe me, dear Walter, your most devoted servant,
>
> JAMES HOGG."

The reader will, I doubt not, be particularly amused with one of the suggestions in this letter; namely, that Scott should transcribe the Shepherd's narrative *in fore* of his life and education, and, merely putting "He" for "I," adopt it as his own composition. James, however, would have had no hesitation about offering a similar suggestion either to Scott, or Wordsworth, or Byron, at any period of their renown. To say nothing about modesty, his notions of literary honesty were always exceedingly loose; but, at the same time, we must take into account his peculiar notions, or rather no notions, as to the proper limits of a joke.

Literature, like misery, makes men acquainted with strange bed-fellows. Let us return from the worthy Shepherd of Ettrick to the courtly wit and scholar of Sunninghill. In the last quoted of his letters, he expresses his fear that Scott's military avocations might cause him to publish the Tristrem unaccompanied by his "Essay on the History of Scottish Poetry." It is needless to add that no such Essay ever was completed; but I have heard Scott say that his plan had been to begin with the age of Thomas of Ercildoune, and bring the subject down to his own, illustrating each stage of his progress by a specimen of verse imitating every great master's style, as he had done that of the original Sir Tristrem in his "*Conclusion*." Such a series of pieces from his hand would have been invaluable, merely as bringing out in a clear manner the *gradual* divarication of the two great dialects of the English tongue; but seeing by his "Verses on a Poacher," written many years after this, in professed imitation of Crabbe, with what happy art he could pour the poetry of his own mind into the mould of another artist, it is impossible to doubt that we have lost better things than antiquarian illumination by the non-completion of a design in which he should have embraced successively the tone and measure of Douglas, Dunbar, Lindesay, Montgomerie, Hamilton, Ramsay, Ferguson, and Burns.

The "Tristrem" was now far advanced at press. He says to Ellis, on the 19th March:—

> "As I had a world of things to say to you, I have been culpably, but most naturally silent. When you turn a bottle with its head downmost, you must have remarked that the extreme impatience of the contents to get out all at once greatly impedes their getting out at all. I have, however, been forming the resolution of sending a grand packet with Sir Tristrem, who will kiss your hands in about a fortnight. I intend uncastrated copies for you, Heber, and Mr. Douce, who, I am willing to hope, will accept this mark of my great respect and warm remembrance of his kindness while in London. Pray send me without delay the passage refer-

ring to *Thomas* in the French 'Hornchild.' Far from being daunted with the position of the enemy, I am resolved to carry it at the point of the bayonet, and, like an able general, to attack where it would be difficult to defend. Without metaphor or parable, I am determined not only that my Tomas *shall* be the author of 'Tristrem,' but that he shall be the author of 'Hornchild' also. I must, however, read over the romance before I can make my arrangements. Holding, with Ritson, that the copy in *his* collection is translated from the French, I do not see why we should not suppose that the French had been originally a version from our Thomas. The date does not greatly frighten me, as I have extended Thomas of Ercildoune's life to the three-score and ten years of the Psalmist, and consequently removed back the date of "Sir Tristrem" to 1250. The French translation might be written for that matter within a few days after Thomas's work was completed —and I can allow a few years. He lived on the Border, already possessed by Norman families, and in the vicinity of Northumberland, where there were many more. Do you think the minstrels of the Percies, the Vescies, the Morells, the Grais, and the De Vaux, were not acquainted with honest Thomas, their next door neighbour, who was a poet, and wrote excellent tales—and moreover a *laird*, and gave, I dare be sworn, good dinners? And would they not anxiously translate for the amusement of their masters a story like 'Hornchild,' so intimately connected with the lands in which they had settled? And do you not think, from the whole structure of 'Hornchild,' however often translated and re-translated, that it must have been originally of northern extraction? I have not time to tell you certain suspicions I entertain that Mr. Douce's fragments are the work of one Raoull de Beauvais, who flourished about the middle of the thirteenth century, and for whose accommodation principally I have made Thomas, to use a military phrase, *dress backwards* for ten years."

All this playful language is exquisitely characteristic of Scott's indomitable adherence to his own views. But his making *Thomas dress backwards* —and resolving that, if necessary, he *shall be* the author of Hornchild, as well as Sir Tristrem—may perhaps remind the reader of Don Quixote's method of repairing the headpiece which, as originally constructed, one blow had sufficed to demolish:—Not altogether approving of his having demolished it with so much ease, to secure himself from the like danger for the future, he made it over again, fencing it with small bars of iron within, in such a manner that *he rested satisfied of its strength—and without caring to make a fresh experiment on it, he approved and looked upon it as a most excellent helmet.*"

Ellis having made some observations on Scott's article upon Godwin's Life of Chaucer, which implied a notion that he had formed a regular connexion with the Edinburgh Review, he, in the same letter, says:—

"I quite agree with you as to the general conduct of the Review, which savours more of a wish to display than to instruct; but as essays, many of the articles are invaluable, and the principal conductor is a man of very acute and universal talent. I am not regularly connected with the work, nor have I either inclination or talents to use the critical scalping-knife, unless as in the case of Godwin, where flesh and blood succumbed under the temptation. I don't know if you have looked into his tomes, of which a whole edition has vanished, I was at a loss to know how, till I conjectured that as the heaviest materials to come at, they have been sent on the secret expedition planned by Mr. Phillips, and adopted by our sapient Government, for blocking up the mouth of our enemy's harbours. They should have my free consent to take Phillips and Godwin, and all our other lumber, literary and political, for the same beneficial purpose. But, in general, I think it ungentlemanly to wound any person's feelings through an anonymous publication, unless where conceit or false doctrine calls for reprobation. Where praise can be conscientiously mingled in a larger proportion than blame, there is always some amusement in throwing together our ideas upon the works of our fellow-labourers, and no injustice in publishing them. On such occasions, *and in our way*, I may possibly once or twice a-year, furnish my critical friends with an article.

"Sir Tristrem" was at length published on the 2d of May, 1804, by Constable, who, however, expected so little popularity for the work that the edition consisted only of 150 copies. These were sold at a high price (two guineas), otherwise they would not have been enough to cover the expenses of paper and printing. Mr. Ellis, and Scott's other antiquarian friends, were much dissatisfied with these arrangements; but I doubt not that Constable was a better judge than any of them. The work, however, partook in due time of the favour attend ing its editor's name. In 1806, 750 copies were called for; and 1000 in 1811. After that time, Sir Tristrem was included in the collective editions of Scott's poetry; but he had never parted with the copyright, merely allowing his general publishers to insert it among his other works, whenever they chose to do so, as a matter of courtesy. It was not a performance from which he had ever anticipated any pecuniary profit, but it maintained at least, if it did not raise, his reputation in the circle of his fellow antiquaries; and his own *Conclusion*, in the manner of the original romance, must always be admired as a remarkable specimen of skill and dexterity.

As to the arguments of the Introduction, I shall not in this place attempt any discussion.* Whether the story of Tristrem was first told in Welsh, Armorican, French, or English verse, there can, I think, be no doubt that it had been told in verse with such success as to obtain very general renown, by Thomas of Ercildoune, and that the copy edited by Scott was either the composition of one who had heard the old Rhymer recite his lay, or the identical lay itself. The introduction of Thomas's name in the third person, as not the author, but the author's authority, appears to have had a great share in convincing Scott that the Auchinleck MS. contained not the original, but the copy of an English admirer and contemporary. This point seems to have been rendered more doubtful by some quotations in the recent edition of Warton's History of English Poetry; but the argument derived from the enthusiastic exclamation "God help Sir Tristrem the knight—he fought for England," still remains; and stronger perhaps even than that, in the opinion of modern philologists, is the total absence of any Scottish or even Northumbrian peculiarities in the diction.

All this controversy may be waived here. Scott's object and delight was to revive the fame of the Rhymer, whose traditional history he had listened to while yet an infant among the crags of Smailholme. He had already celebrated him in a noble ballad;† he now devoted a volume to elucidate a fragment supposed to be substantially his work; and we shall find that thirty years after, when the lamp of his own genius was all but spent, it could still revive and throw out at least some glimmerings of its original brightness at the name of Thomas of Ercildoune.

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* The critical reader will find all the learning on the subject brought together with much ability in the Preface to "The Poetical Romances of Tristan, in French, in Anglo-Norman, and in Greek, composed in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries—Edited by Francisque Michel," 2 vols. London, 1835.

† See the Minstrelsy (Edition 1833), vol. iv. p. 110.

CHAPTER XIII.

REMOVAL TO ASHESTIEL—DEATH OF CAPTAIN ROBERT SCOTT—MUNGO PARK—COMPLETION AND PUBLICATION OF THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.—1804-1805.

It has been mentioned that in the course of the preceding summer, the Lord-Lieutenant of Selkirkshire complained of Scott's military zeal as interfering sometimes with the discharge of his shrieval functions, and took occasion to remind him, that the law, requiring every Sheriff to reside at least four months in the year within his own jurisdiction, had not hitherto been complied with. It appears that Scott received this communication with some displeasure, being conscious that no duty of any importance had ever been neglected by him; well knowing that the law of residence was not enforced in the cases of many of his brother sheriffs; and, in fact, ascribing his Lord-Lieutenant's complaint to nothing but a certain nervous fidget as to all points of form, for which that respectable nobleman was notorious, as well became, perhaps, an old Lord of the Bedchamber, and High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Kirk.* Scott, however, must have been found so clearly in the wrong, had the case been submitted to the Secretary of State, and Lord Napier conducted the correspondence with such courtesy, never failing to allege as a chief argument the pleasure which it would afford himself and the other gentlemen of Selkirkshire to have more of their Sheriff's society, that, while it would have been highly imprudent to persist, there could be no mortification in yielding. He flattered himself that his active habits would enable him to maintain his connexion with the Edinburgh Cavalry as usual; and, perhaps, he also flattered himself, that residing for the summer in Selkirkshire would not interfere more seriously with his business as a barrister, than the occupation of the cottage at Lasswade had hitherto done.

While he was seeking about, accordingly, for some "lodge in the Forest," his kinsman of Harden suggested that the tower of Auld Wat might be refitted, so as to serve his purpose; and he received the proposal with enthusiastic delight. On a more careful inspection of the localities, however, he became sensible that he would be practically at a greater distance from county business of all kinds at Harden, than if he were to continue at Lasswade. Just at this time, the house of Ashestiel, situated on the southern bank of the Tweed, a few miles from Selkirk, became vacant by the death of its proprietor, Colonel Russell, who had married a sister of Scott's mother, and the consequent dispersion of the family. The young laird of Ashestiel, his cousin, was then in India; and the Sheriff took a lease of the house and grounds, with a small farm adjoining. On the 4th May, two days after the Tristrem had been published, he says to Ellis: "I have been engaged in travelling backwards and forwards to Selkirkshire upon little pieces of business, just important enough to prevent my doing any thing to purpose. One great matter, however, I have achieved, which is, procuring myself a place of residence, which will save me these teasing migrations in future, so that though I part with my sweet little cottage on the banks of the Esk, you will find me this summer in the very centre of the ancient Reged, in a decent farmhouse overhanging the Tweed, and situated in a wild pastoral country." And again, on the 19th, he thus apologizes for not having answered a letter of the 10th: —"For more than a month my head was fairly tenanted by ideas, which, though strictly pastoral and rural, were neither literary nor poetical. *Long sheep*, and *short sheep*, and *tups*, and *gimmers*, and *hogs*, and *dinmonts*, had made a perfect sheepfold of my understanding, which is hardly yet cleared of them.[*]—I hope Mrs. Ellis will clap a bridle on her imagination. Ettrick Forest boasts finely shaped hills and clear romantic streams; but, alas! they are bare to wildness, and denuded of the beautiful natural wood with which they were formerly shaded. It is mortifying to see that, though wherever the sheep are excluded, the copse has immediately sprung up in abundance, so that enclosures only are wanting to restore the wood wherever it might be useful or ornamental, yet hardly a proprietor has attempted to give it fair play for a resurrection. . . . You see we reckon positively on you —the more because our arch-critic Jeffrey tells me that he met you in London, and found you still inclined for a northern trip. All our wise men in the north are rejoiced at the prospect of seeing George Ellis. If you delay your journey till July, I shall then be free of the Courts of Law, and will meet you upon the Border, at whatever side you enter."

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* I remember being much amused with an instance of Lord Napier's precision in small matters, mentioned by the late Lady Stewart of Castlemilk, in Lanarkshire. Lord and Lady Napier had arrived at Castlemilk, with the intention of staying a week; but next morning it was announced that a circumstance had occurred which rendered it indispensable for them to return without delay to their own seat in Selkirkshire. It was impossible for Lady Stewart to extract any further explanation at the moment, but it turned out afterwards that Lord Napier's valet had committed the grievous mistake of packing up a set of neckcloths which did not correspond *in point of date* with the shirts they accompanied.

The business part of these letters refers to Scott's brother Daniel, who, as he expresses it, "having been bred to the mercantile line, had been obliged, by some untoward circumstances, particularly an imprudent connexion with an artful woman, to leave Edinburgh for Liverpool, and now to be casting his eyes towards Jamaica." Scott requests Ellis to help him if he can, by introducing him to some of his own friends or agents in that island: and Ellis furnishes him accordingly with letters to Mr. Blackburne, a friend and brother proprietor, who appears to have paid Daniel Scott every possible attention, and soon provided him with suitable employment on a healthy part of his estates. But the same low tastes and habits which had reduced the unfortunate young man to the necessity of expatriating himself, recurred after a brief season of penitence and order, and continued until he had accumulated great affliction upon all his family.

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[*] Describing his meeting with Scott in the summer of 1801, James Hogg says—"During the sociality of the evening, the discourse ran very much on the different breeds of sheep, that curse of the community of Ettrick Forest. The original black-faced Forest breed being always called *the short sheep*, and the Cheviot breed *the long sheep*, the disputes at that period ran very high about the practicable profits of each. Mr. Scott, who had come into that remote district, to preserve what fragments remained of its legendary lore, was rather bored with everlasting questions, of the long and the short sheep. So at length, putting on his most serious, calculating face, he turned to Mr. Walter Bryden, and said, 'I am rather at a loss regarding the merits of this *very* important question. How long must a sheep actually measure to come under the denomination of *a long sheep?*' Mr. Bryden, who, in the simplicity of his heart, neither perceived the quiz nor the reproof, fell to answer with great sincerity. 'It's the woo' [wool], sir—it's the woo' that makes the difference. The lang sheep ha'e the short woo', and the short sheep ha'e the lang thing, and these are just kind o' names we gi'e them like.' Mr. Scott could not preserve his grave face of strict calculation; it went gradually awry, and a hearty guffaw "[i. e. horselaugh]" followed. When I saw the very same words repeated near the beginning (p. 4) of the 'Black Dwarf,' how could I be mistaken of the author?"—*Autobiography prefixed to Hogg's Altrive Tales.*"

On the 10th of June, 1804, died, at his seat of Rosebank, Captain Robert Scott, the affectionate uncle whose name has often occurred in this narrative.*

"He was," (says his nephew to Ellis, on the 18th) "a man of universal benevolence, and great kindness towards his friends, and to me individually. His manners were so much tinged with the habits of celibacy as to render them peculiar, though by no means unpleasingly so, and his profession (that of a seaman) gave a high colouring to the whole. The loss is one which, though the course of nature led me to expect it, did not take place at last without considerable pain to my feelings. The arrangement of his affairs, and the distribution of his small fortune among his relations, will devolve in a great measure upon me. He has distinguished me by leaving me a beautiful little villa on the banks of the Tweed, with every possible convenience annexed to it, and about thirty acres of the finest land in Scotland. Notwithstanding, however, the temptation that this bequest offers, I continue to pursue my Reged plan, and expect to be settled at Ashestiel in the course of a month. Rosebank is situated so near the village of Kelso as hardly to be sufficiently a country residence; besides, it is hemmed in by hedges and ditches, not to mention Dukes and Lady Dowagers, which are bad things for little people. It is expected to sell to great advantage. I shall buy a mountain farm with the purchase-money, and be quite the Laird of the Cairn and the Scaur."

Scott sold Rosebank in the course of the year for £5000; his share (being a ninth) of his uncle's other property amounted, I believe, to about £500; and he had besides a legacy of £100 in his quality of trustee. This bequest made an important change in his pecuniary position, and influenced accordingly the arrangements of his future life. Independently of practice at the bar, and of literary profits, he was now, with his little patrimony, his Sheriffship, and about £200 per annum arising from the stock ultimately settled on his wife, in possession of a fixed revenue of nearly, if not quite, £1000 a-year.

On the 1st of August, he writes to Ellis from Ashestiel—

"Having had only about a hundred and fifty things to do, I have scarcely done any thing, and yet could not give myself leave to suppose that I had leisure to write letters. 1st, I had this farm-house to furnish from sales, from broker's shops, and from all manner of hospitals for incurable furniture. 2dly, I had to let my cottage on the banks of the Esk. 3dly, I had to arrange matters for the sale of Rosebank. 4thly, I had to go into quarters with our cavalry, which made a very idle fortnight in the midst of all this business. Last of all, I had to superintend a removal, or what we call a *flitting*, which, of all bores under the cope of Heaven, is bore the most tremendous. After all these storms, we are now most comfortably settled, and have only to regret deeply our disappointment at finding your northern march blown up. We had been projecting about twenty expeditions, and were pleasing ourselves at Mrs. Ellis's expected surprise on finding herself so totally built in by mountains, as I am at the present writing hereof. We are seven miles from kirk and market. We rectify the last inconvenience by killing our own mutton and poultry; and, as to the former, finding there was some chance of my family turning pagans, I have adopted the goodly practice of reading prayers every Sunday, to the great edification of my household. Think of this, you that have the happiness to be within two steps of the church, and commiserate those who dwell in the wilderness. I showed Charlotte yesterday *the Catrail*, and told her that to inspect that venerable monument was one main object of your intended journey to Scotland. She is of opinion that ditches must be more scarce in the neighbourhood of Windsor Forest than she had hitherto had the least idea of."

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* In the obituary of the Scots' Magazine for this month I find:—"Universally regretted, Captain Robert Scott of Rosebank, a gentleman whose life afforded an uniform example of unostentatious charity and extensive benevolence."

Ashestiel will be visited by many for his sake, as long as Waverley and Marmion are remembered. A more beautiful situation for the residence of a poet could not be conceived. The house was then a small one, but, compared with the cottage at Lasswade, its accommodations were amply sufficient. You approached it through an old-fashioned garden, with holly hedges, and broad, green, terrace walks. On one side, close under the windows, is a deep ravine, clothed with venerable trees, down which a mountain rivulet is heard, more than seen, in its progress to the Tweed. The river itself is separated from the high bank on which the house stands only by a narrow meadow of the richest verdure. Opposite, and all around, are the green hills. The valley there is narrow, and the aspect in every direction is that of perfect pastoral repose. The heights immediately behind are those which divide the Tweed from the Yarrow; and the latter celebrated stream lies within an easy ride, in the course of which the traveller passes through a variety of the finest mountain scenery in the south of Scotland. No town is within seven miles, but Selkirk, which was then still smaller and quieter than it is now; there was hardly even a gentleman's family within visiting distance, except at Yair, a few miles lower on the Tweed, the ancient seat of the Pringles of Whytbank, and at Bowhill, between the Yarrow and the Ettrick, where the Earl of Dalkeith used occasionally to inhabit a small shooting lodge, which has since grown to be a magnificent ducal residence. The country all around, with here and there an insignificant exception, belongs to the Buccleuch estate: so that, whichever way he choose to turn, the bard of the clan had ample room and verge enough, and all appliances to boot, for every variety of field sport that might happen to please his fancy; and being then in the prime vigour of manhood, he was not slow to profit by these advantages. Mean time, the concerns of his own little farm, and the care of his absent relation's woods, gave him healthful occupation in the intervals of the chase; and he had long, solitary evenings for the uninterrupted exercise of his pen; perhaps, on the whole, better opportunities of study than he had ever enjoyed before, or was to meet with elsewhere in later days.

When he first examined Ashestiel, with a view to being his cousin's tenant, he thought of taking home James Hogg to superintend the sheep-farm, and keep watch over the house also during the winter. I am not able to tell in what manner this proposal fell to the ground. In January 1804, the Shepherd writes to him:—

"I have no intention of waiting for so distant a prospect as that of being manager of your farm, though I have no doubt of our joint endeavour proving successful, nor yet of your willingness to employ me in that capacity. His Grace, the Duke of Buccleuch, hath at present a farm vacant in Eskdale, and I have been importuned by friends to get a letter from you and apply for it. You can hardly be conscious what importance your protection hath given me already, not only in mine own eyes, but even in those of others. You might write to him, or to any of the family you are best acquainted with, stating that such and such a character was about leaving his native country for want of a residence in the farming line."

I am very doubtful if Scott—however willing to encounter the risk of employing Hogg as his own *grieve*, or bailiff—would have felt himself justified at this, or, indeed, at any time, in recommending him as the tenant of a considerable farm on the Duke of Buccleuch's estate. But I am also quite at a loss to comprehend how Hogg should have conceived it possible, at this period, when he certainly had no capital whatever, that the Duke's chamberlain should agree to accept him for a tenant, on any attestation, however strong, as to the excellence of his character and intentions. Be that as it may, if Scott made the application which the Shepherd suggested, it failed. So did a negotiation which he certainly did enter upon about the same time with the late Earl of Caernarvon (then Lord Porchester), through that nobleman's aunt, Mrs. Scott of Harden, with the view of obtaining for Hogg the situation of bailiff on one of his Lordship's estates in the west of England; and such, I believe, was the result of several other attempts of the same kind with landed proprietors nearer home. Perhaps the Shepherd had already set his heart so much on taking rank as a farmer in his own district, that he witnessed the failure of any such negotiations with indifference. As regards the management of Ashestiel, I find no trace of that proposal having ever been renewed.

In truth Scott had hardly been a week in possession of his new domains, before he made acquaintance with a character much better suited to his purpose than James Hogg ever could have been. I mean honest Thomas Purdie, his faithful servant—his affectionately devoted humble friend from this time until death parted them. Tom was first brought before him in his capacity of Sheriff, on a charge of poaching, when the poor fellow gave such a touching account of his circumstances,—a wife, and I know not how many children depending on his exertions—work scarce and grouse abundant,—and all this with a mixture of odd sly humour,—that the Sheriff's heart was moved. Tom escaped the penalty of the law—was taken into employment as shepherd, and showed such zeal, activity, and shrewdness in that capacity, that Scott never had occasion to repent of the step he soon afterwards took, in promoting him to the position which had been originally offered to James Hogg.

It was also about the same time that he took into his service as coachman Peter Mathieson, brother-in-law to Thomas Purdie, another faithful servant, who never afterwards left him, and still survives his kind master. Scott's awkward conduct of the little phaeton had exposed his wife to more than one perilous overturn, before he agreed to set up a close carriage, and call in the assistance of this steady charioteer.

During this autumn Scott formed the personal acquaintance of Mungo Park, the celebrated victim of African discovery. On his return from his first expedition, Park endeavoured to establish himself as a medical practitioner in the town of Hawick; but the drudgeries of that calling in such a district soon exhausted his ardent temper, and he was now living in seclusion in his native cottage at Fowlsheils on the Yarrow, nearly opposite Newark Castle. His brother, Archibald Park, a man remarkable for strength both of mind and body, was the sheriff's-officer of that district, and introduced the traveller to his principal. They soon became much attached to each other; and Scott supplied some interesting anecdotes of their brief intercourse, to the late Mr. Wishaw, the editor of Park's posthumous Journal, with which I shall blend a few minor circumstances which I gathered from him in conversation long afterwards. "On one occasion," he says, "the traveller communicated to him some very remarkable adventures which had befallen him in Africa, but which he had not recorded in his book." On Scott's asking the cause of this silence, Mungo answered, "that in all cases where he had information to communicate, which he thought of importance to the public, he had stated the facts boldly, leaving it to his readers to give such credit to his statements as they might appear justly to deserve; but that he would not shock their faith, or render his travels more marvellous, by introducing circumstances, which, however true, were of little or no moment, as they related solely to his own personal adventures and escapes." This reply struck Scott as highly characteristic of the man; and though strongly tempted to set down some of these marvels for Mr. Wishaw's use, he on reflection abstained from doing so, holding it unfair to record what the adventurer had deliberately chosen to suppress in his own narrative. He confirms the account given by Park's biographer of his cold and reserved manners to strangers; and, in particular, of his disgust with the *indirect* questions which curious visitors would often put to him upon the subject of his travels. "This practice," said Mungo, "exposes me to two risks; either that I may not understand the questions meant to be put, or that my answers to them may be misconstrued;" and he contrasted such conduct with the frankness of Scott's revered friend, Dr. Adam Ferguson, who, the very first day the traveller dined with him at Hallyards, spread a large map of Africa on the table, and made him trace out his progress thereupon, inch by inch, questioning him minutely as to every step he had taken. "Here, however," says Scott, "Dr. F. was using a privilege to which he was well entitled by his venerable age and high literary character, but which could not have been exercised with propriety by any common stranger."

Calling one day at Fowlsheils, and not finding Park at home, Scott walked in search of him along the banks of the Yarrow, which in that neighbourhood passes over various ledges of rock, forming deep pools and eddies between them. Presently he discovered his friend standing alone on the bank, plunging one stone after another into the water, and watching anxiously the bubbles as they rose to the surface. "This," said Scott, "appears but an idle amusement for one who has seen so much stirring adventure." "Not so idle, perhaps, as you suppose," answered Mungo. "This was the manner in which I used to ascertain the depth of a river in Africa before I ventured to cross it—

judging whether the attempt would be safe, by the time the bubbles of air took to ascend." At this time Park's intention of a second expedition had never been revealed to Scott; but he instantly formed the opinion that these experiments on Yarrow were connected with some such purpose.

His thoughts had always continued to be haunted with Africa. He told Scott that whenever he awoke suddenly in the night, owing to a nervous disorder with which he was troubled, he fancied himself still a prisoner in the tent of Ali; but when the poet expressed some surprise that he should design again to revisit those scenes, he answered, that he would rather brave Africa and all its horrors, than wear out his life in long and toilsome rides over the hills of Scotland, for which the remuneration was hardly enough to keep soul and body together.

Towards the end of the autumn, when about to quit his country for the last time, Park paid Scott a farewell visit, and slept at Ashestiel. Next morning his host accompanied him homewards over the wild chain of hills between the Tweed and the Yarrow. Park talked much of his new scheme, and mentioned his determination to tell his family that he had some business for a day or two in Edinburgh, and send them his blessing from thence without returning to take leave. He had married, not long before, a pretty and amiable woman; and when they reached the *Williamhope Ridge*, "the autumnal mist floating heavily and slowly down the valley of the Yarrow," presented to Scott's imagination "a striking emblem of the troubled and uncertain prospect which his undertaking afforded." He remained, however, unshaken, and at length they reached the spot at which they had agreed to separate. A small ditch divided the moor from the road, and, in going over it, Park's horse stumbled, and nearly fell. "I am afraid, Mungo," said the Sheriff, "that is a bad omen." To which he answered, smiling, "*Freits* (omens) follow those who look to them." With this expression Mungo struck the spurs into his horse, and Scott never saw him again. His parting proverb, by the way, was probably suggested by one of the Border ballads, in which species of lore he was almost as great a proficient as the Sheriff himself; for we read in "Edom o' Gordon,"—

> "Them look to freits, my master dear,
> Then freits will follow them."

I must not omit that George Scott, the unfortunate companion of Park's second journey, was the son of a tenant on the Buccleuch estate, whose skill in drawing having casually attracted the Sheriff's attention, he was recommended by him to the protection of the family, and by this means established in a respectable situation in the Ordnance department of the Tower of London; but the stories of his old acquaintance Mungo Park's discoveries, had made such an impression on his fancy, that nothing could prevent his accompanying him on the fatal expedition of 1805.

The brother of Mungo Park remained in Scott's employment for many years, and was frequently his companion in his mountain rides. Though a man of the most dauntless temperament, he was often alarmed at Scott's reckless horsemanship. "The de'il's in ye, Sherra," he would say, "ye'll never halt till they bring you hame with your feet foremost." He rose greatly in favour, in consequence of the gallantry with which he seized a gipsy, accused of murder, from amidst a group of similar desperadoes, on whom the Sheriff and he had come unexpectedly in a desolate part of the country.

To return to The Lay of the Last Minstrel:—Ellis, understanding it to be now nearly ready for the press, writes to Scott, urging him to set it forth with some engraved illustrations—if possible, after Flaxman, whose splendid designs from Homer had shortly before made their appearance. He answers, August 21—

> "I should have liked very much to have had appropriate embellishments. Indeed, we made some attempts of the kind, but they did not succeed. I should fear Flaxman's genius is too classic to stoop to body forth my Gothic Borderers. Would there not be some risk of their resembling the antique of Homer's heroes rather than the iron race of Salvator? After all, perhaps, nothing is more difficult than for a painter to adopt the author's ideas of an imaginary character, especially when it is founded on traditions to which the artist is a stranger. I should like at least to be at his elbow when at work. I wish very much I could have sent you the Lay while in MS., to have had the advantage of your opinion and corrections. But Ballantyne galled my kibes so severely during an unusual fit of activity, that I gave him the whole story in a sort of pet both with him and with it. . . . . I have lighted upon a very good amanuensis for copying such matters as the *Lay le Frain*, &c. He was sent down here by some of the London booksellers in a half-starved state, but begins to pick up a little. . . I am just about to set out on a grand expedition of great importance to my comfort in this place. You must know that Mr. Plummer, my predecessor in this county, was a good antiquary, and left a valuable collection of books, which he entailed with the estate, the first successors being three of his sisters, at least as old and musty as any Caxton or Wynkyn de Worde in his library. Now I must contrive to coax those watchful dragons to give me admittance into this garden of the Hesperides. I suppose they trouble the volumes as little as *the* dragon did the golden pippins; but they may not be the more easily soothed on that account. However, I set out on my *quest*, like a *preux chevalier*, taking care to leave Camp, for dirtying the carpet, and to carry the greyhounds with me, whose appearance will indicate that hare soup may be forthcoming in due season. By the way, did I tell you that Fitz-Camp is dead and another on the stocks? As our stupid postman might mistake *Reged*, address, as per date, Ashestiel, Selkirk, by Berwick."

I believe the spinsters of Sunderland hall proved very generous dragons; and Scott lived to see them succeeded in the guardianship of Mr. Plummer's literary treasures by an amiable young gentleman of his own name and family. The half-starved amanuensis of this letter was *Henry Weber*, a laborious German, of whom we shall hear more hereafter. With regard to the pictorial embellishments contemplated for the first edition of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, I believe the artist in whose designs the poet took the greatest interest was Mr. Masquerier, now of Brighton, with whom he corresponded at some length on the subject; but his distance from that ingenious gentleman's residence was inconvenient, and the booksellers were probably impatient of delay, when the MS. was once known to be in the hands of the printer.

There is a circumstance which must already have struck such of my readers as knew the author in his latter days, namely, the readiness with which he seems to have communicated this poem, in its progress, not only to his own familiar friends, but to new and casual acquaintances. We shall find him following the same course with his Marmion—but not, I think, with any of his subsequent works. His determination to consult the movements of his own mind alone in the conduct of his pieces was probably taken before he began the Lay; and he soon resolved to trust for the detection of minor inaccuracies to two persons only—James Ballantyne and William Erskine. The printer was himself a man of considerable literary talents; his own style had the incurable faults of pomposity and affectation, but his eye for more venial errors in the writings of others was quick, and, though his personal address was apt to give a stranger the impression of insincerity, he was in reality an honest man, and conveyed his mind on such matters with equal candour and delicacy during the whole of Scott's brilliant career. In the vast majority of instances he found his friend acquiesce at once in the propriety of his suggestions; nay, there certainly were cases, though rare, in which his advice to alter things of much more consequence than a word or a rhyme, was frankly tendered, and on deliberation adopted by Scott. Mr. Erskine was the referee whenever the poet hesitated about taking the hints of the zealous typographer, and his refined taste and gentle manners rendered his critical alliance highly valuable. With two such faithful friends within his reach, the author of the Lay might safely dispense with sending his MS. to be revised even by George Ellis.

Before he left Ashestiel for the winter session, the printing of the poem had made considerable progress. Ellis writes to him on the 10th November, complaining of bad health, and adds,—

"Tu quid agis? I suppose you are still an inhabitant of Reged, and being there it is impossible that your head should have been solely occupied by the ten thousand cares which you are likely to have in common with other mortals, or even by the *Lay*, which must have been long since completed, but must have started during the summer new projects sufficient to employ the lives of half-a-dozen patriarchs. Pray tell me all about it, for as the present state of my frame precludes me from much activity, I want to enjoy that of my friends."

Scott answers from Edinburgh:—

"I fear you fall too much into the sedentary habits incident to a literary life, like my poor friend Plummer, who used to say that a walk from the parlour to the garden once a day was sufficient exercise for any rational being, and that no one but a fool or a fox-hunter would take more. I wish you could have had a seat on Hassan's tapestry to have brought Mrs. Ellis and you soft and fair to Ashestiel, where with farm mutton at four P. M., and goats' whey at 6 A. M., I think we could have re-established as much *embonpoint* as ought to satisfy a poetical antiquary. As for my country amusements, I have finished the Lay, with which and its accompanying notes the press now groans; but I have started nothing except some scores of hares, many of which my gallant greyhounds brought to the ground."

Ellis had also touched upon a literary feud then raging between Scott's allies of the Edinburgh Review, and the late Dr. Thomas Young, illustrious for inventive genius, displayed equally in physical science and in philological literature. A northern critic, whoever he was, had treated with merry contempt certain discoveries in natural philosophy and the mechanical arts, more especially that of the undulating theory of light, which ultimately conferred on Young's name one of its highest distinctions.

"He had been for some time," says Ellis, "lecturer at the Royal Institution; and having determined to publish his lectures, he had received from one of the booksellers the offer of £1000 for the copyright. He was actually preparing for the press, when the bookseller came to him, and told him that the ridicule thrown by the Edinburgh Review, on some papers of his in the Philosophical Transactions, had so frightened the whole *trade* that he must request to be released from his bargain. This consequence, it is true, could not have been foreseen by the reviewer, who, however, appears to have written from feelings of private animosity; and I still continue to think, though I greatly admire the good taste of the literary essays, and the perspicuity of the dissertations on political economy, that an apparent want of candour is too generally the character of a work which, from its independence on the interests of booksellers, might have been expected to be particularly free from this defect."

Scott rejoins:—

"I am sorry for the very pitiful catastrophe of Dr. Young's publication, because, although I am altogether unacquainted with the merits of the controversy, one must always regret so very serious a consequence of a diatribe. The truth is, that these gentlemen reviewers ought often to read over the fable of the boys and frogs, and should also remember it is much more easy to destroy than to build, to criticise than to compose. While on this subject, I kiss the rod of my critic in the Edinburgh, on the subject of the price of Sir Tristrem; it was not my fault, however, that the public had it not cheap enough, as I declined taking any copy-money, or share in the profits, and *nothing* surely was as reasonable a charge as I could make."

On the 30th December he resumes:—

"The *Lay* is now ready, and will probably be in Longman and Rees's hands shortly after this comes to yours. I have charged them to send you a copy by the first conveyance, and shall be impatient to know whether you think the entire piece corresponds to that which you have already seen. I would also fain send a copy to Gifford, by way of introduction.—My reason is that I understand he is about to publish an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, and I think I could offer him the use of some miscellaneous notes, which I made long since on the margin of their works.* Besides I have a good esteem of Mr. Gifford as a manly English poet, very different from most of our modern versifiers.—We are so fond of Reged that we are just going to set out for our farm in the middle of a snow-storm; all that we have to comfort ourselves with is, that our march has been ordered with great military talent—a detachment of minced pies and brandy having preceded us. In case we are not buried in a snow-wreath, our stay will be but short. Should that event happen, we must wait the thaw."

Ellis, not having as yet received the new poem, answers on the 9th January, 1805,—

"I look daily and with the greatest anxiety for the Last Minstrel—of which I still hope to see a future edition decorated with designs *à la Flaxman*, as the Lays of Homer have already been. I think you told me that Sir Tristrem had not excited much sensation in Edinburgh. As I have not been in London this age, I can't produce the contrary testimony of our metropolis. But I can produce one person, and that one worth a considerable number, who speaks of it with rapture, and says, 'I am only sorry that Scott has not (and I am sure he has not) told us the whole of his creed on the subject of Tomas, and the other early Scotch minstrels. I suppose he was afraid of the critics, and determined to say very little more than he was able to establish by incontestable proofs. I feel infinitely obliged to him for what he has told us, and I have no hesitation in saying, that I consider Sir T. as by far the most interesting work that has as yet been published on the subject of our earliest poets, and, indeed, such a piece of literary antiquity as no one could have, *a priori*, supposed to exist.' This is Frere—our ex-ambassador for Spain, whom you would delight to know, and who would delight to know you. It is remarkable that *you* were, I believe, the *most ardent* of all the admirers of his old English version of the Saxon Ode;* and he is, *per contra*, the warmest panegyrist of your *Conclusion*, which he can repeat by heart, and affirms to be the very best imitation of old English at present existing. I think I can trust you for having concluded the Last Minstrel with as much spirit as it was begun—if you have been capable of any thing unworthy of your fame amidst the highest mountains of Reged, there is an end of all inspiration."

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* It was his *Massinger* that Gifford had at this time in hand. His Ben Jonson followed, and then his Ford. Some time later, he projected editions, both of Beaumont and Fletcher, and of Shakspeare: but, to the grievous misfortune of literature, died without having completed either of them. We shall see presently what became of Scott's Notes on Beaumont and Fletcher.

Scott answers:—

"Frere is so perfect a master of the ancient style of composition, that I would rather have his suffrage than that of a whole synod of your vulgar antiquaries. The more I think on *our* system of the origin of romance, the more simplicity and uniformity it seems to possess; and though I adopted it late and with hesitation, I believe I shall never see cause to abandon it. Yet I am aware of the danger of attempting to *prove*, where proofs are but scanty, and probable suppositions must be placed in lieu of them. I think the Welsh antiquaries have considerably injured their claims to confidence, by attempting to detail very remote events with all the accuracy belonging to the facts of yesterday. You will hear one of them describe you the cut of Llywarch Hen's beard, or the whittle of Urien Reged, as if he had trimmed the one, or cut his cheese with the other. These high pretensions weaken greatly our belief in the Welsh poems, which probably contain real treasures. 'T is a pity some sober-minded man will not take the trouble to sift the wheat from the chaff, and give us a good account of their MSS. and traditions. Pray, what is become of the *Mabinogion?* It is a proverb, that children and fools talk truth, and I am mistaken if even the same valuable quality may not sometimes be extracted out of the tales made to entertain both. I presume, while we talk of childish and foolish tales, that the Lay is already with you, although, in these points, *Longmanum est errare.* Pray enquire for your copy."

In the first week of January, 1805, "The Lay" was published; and its success at once decided that literature should form the main business of Scott's life.

In his modest *Introduction* of 1830, he had himself told us all that he thought the world would ever desire to know of the origin and progress of this his first great original production. The present Memoir, however, has already included many minor particulars, for which I believe no student of literature will reproach the compiler. I shall not mock the reader with many words as to the merits of a poem which has now kept its place for nearly a third of a century; but one or two additional remarks on the history of the composition may be pardoned.

It is curious to trace the small beginnings and gradual developement of his design. The lovely Countess of Dalkeith hears a wild rude legend of Border *diablerie*, and sportively asks him to make it the subject of a ballad. He had been already labouring in the elucidation of the "quaint Inglis" ascribed to an ancient seer and bard of the same district, and perhaps completed his own sequel, intending the whole to be included in the third volume of the Minstrelsy. He assents to Lady Dalkeith's request, and casts about for some new variety of diction and rhyme, which might be adopted without impropriety in a closing strain for the same collection. Sir John Stoddart's casual recitation, a year or two before, of Coleridge's unpublished Christabel, had fixed the music of that noble fragment in his memory; and it occurs to him, that by throwing the story of Gilpin Horner into somewhat of a similar cadence, he might produce such an echo of the later metrical romance, as would serve to connect his *Conclusion* of the primitive Sir Tristrem with his imitations of the common popular ballad in the Grey Brother and Eve of St. John. A single scene of feudal festivity in the hall of Branksome, disturbed by some pranks of a nondescript goblin, was probably all that he contemplated; but his accidental confinement in the midst of a volunteer camp gave him leisure to meditate his theme to the sound of the bugle;—and suddenly there flashes on him the idea of extending his simple outline, so as to embrace a vivid panorama of that old Border life of war and tumult, and all earnest passions, with which his researches on the "Minstrelsy" had by degrees fed his imagination, until every the minutest feature had been taken home and realized with unconscious intenseness of sympathy; so that he had won for himself in the past another world, hardly less complete or familiar than the present. Erskine or Cranstoun suggests that he would do well to divide the poem into cantos, and prefix to each of them a motto explanatory of the action, after the fashion of Spenser in the Faery Queen. He pauses for a moment—and the happiest conception of the framework of a picturesque narrative that ever occurred to any poet—one that Homer might have envied—the creation of the ancient harper starts to life. By such steps did the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" grow out of the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border."

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* "I have only met, in my researches into these matters," says Scott in 1830, "with one poem, which, if it had been produced as ancient, could not have been detected on internal evidence. It is the War Song upon the Victory at Brunnanburgh, translated from the Anglo-Saxon into Anglo-Norman, by the Right Hon. John Hookham Frere. See Ellis's *Specimens of Ancient English Poetry*, vol. i. p. 32. The accomplished editor tells us, that this very singular poem was intended as an imitation of the style and language of the fourteenth century, and was written during the controversy occasioned by the poems attributed to Rowley. Mr. Ellis adds, 'the reader will probably bear with some surprise that this singular instance of critical ingenuity was the composition of an Eton schoolboy.' "—*Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad*, p. 19.

A word more of its felicitous machinery. It was at Bowhill that the Countess of Dalkeith requested a ballad on Gilpin Horner. The ruined castle of Newark closely adjoins that seat, and is now indeed included within its *pleasance*. Newark had been the chosen residence of the first Duchess of Buccleuch, and he accordingly shadows out his own beautiful friend in the person of her lord's ancestress, the last of the original stock of that great house; himself the favoured inmate of Bowhill, introduced certainly to the familiarity of its circle in consequence of his devotion to the poetry of a bypast age, in that of an aged minstrel, "the last of all the race," seeking shelter at the gate of Newark, in days when many an adherent of the fallen cause of Stewart,—his own bearded ancestor, *who had fought at Killiekrankie*, among the rest,—owed their safety to her who

> "In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
> Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb."

The arch allusions which run through all these *Introductions*, without in the least interrupting the truth and graceful pathos of their main impression, seem to me exquisitely characteristic of Scott, whose delight and pride was to play with the genius which nevertheless mastered him at will. For, in truth, what is it that gives to all his works their unique and marking charm, except the matchless effect which sudden effusions of the purest heart-blood of nature derive from their being poured out, to all appearance involuntarily, amidst diction and sentiment cast equally in the mould of the busy world, and the seemingly habitual desire to dwell on nothing but what might be likely to excite curiosity, without too much disturbing deeper feelings, in the saloons of polished life? Such outbursts come forth dramatically in all his writings; but in the interludes and passionate parentheses of the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" we have the poet's own inner soul and temperament laid bare and throbbing before us:—even here, indeed, he has a mask, and he trusts it—but fortunately it is a transparent one.

Many minor personal allusions have been explained in the notes to the last edition of the "Lay." It was hardly necessary even then to say that the choice of the hero had been dictated by the poet's affection for the living descendants of the Baron of Cranstoun; and now—none who have perused the preceding pages can doubt, that he had dressed out his Margaret of Branksome in the form and features of his own first love. This poem may be considered as the "bright consummate flower" in which all the dearest dreams of his youthful fancy had at length found expansion for their strength, spirit, tenderness, and beauty.

In the closing lines—

"Hush'd is the harp—the Minstrel gone;
And did he wander forth alone?
Alone, in indigence and age,
To linger out his pilgrimage?
No!—close beneath proud Newark's tower
Arose the Minstrel's humble bower," &c.

—in these closing lines he has embodied what was, at the time when he penned them, the chief day-dream of Ashestiel. From the moment that his uncle's death placed a considerable sum of ready money at his command, he pleased himself, as we have seen, with the idea of buying a mountain farm, and becoming not only the "sheriff" (as he had in former days delighted to call himself), but "the *laird* of the cairn and the scaur." While he was "labouring *doucement* at the Lay" (as in one of his letters he expresses it), during the recess of 1804, circumstances rendered it next to certain that the small estate of *Broadmeadows*, situated just over against the ruins of Newark on the northern bank of the Yarrow, would soon be exposed to sale; and many a time did he ride round it in company with Lord and Lady Dalkeith,

"When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,"

surveying the beautiful little domain with wistful eyes, and anticipating that

"*There* would he sing achievement high
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the 'rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forget the hunting of the deer;
And Yarrow, as he rolled along,
Bear burden to the Minstrel's song."

I consider it as, in one point of view, the greatest misfortune of his life that this vision was not realized; but the success of the poem itself changed "the spirit of his dream." The favour which it at once attained had not been equalled in the case of any one poem of considerable length during at least two generations: it certainly had not been approached in the case of any narrative poem since the days of Dryden. Before it was sent to the press, it had received warm commendation from the ablest and most influential critic of the time; but when Mr. Jeffrey's reviewal appeared, a month after publication, laudatory as its language was, it scarcely came up to the opinion which had already taken root in the public mind. It, however, quite satisfied the author, and were I at liberty to insert some letters which passed between them in the course of the summer of 1805, it would be seen that their feelings towards each other were those of mutual confidence and gratitude. Indeed, a severe domestic affliction which about this time befell Mr. Jeffrey, called out the expression of such sentiments on both sides in a very touching manner.

I abstain from transcribing the letters which conveyed to Scott the private opinions of persons themselves eminently distinguished in poetry; but I think it just to state, that I have not discovered in any of them—no, not even in those of Wordsworth or Campbell—a strain of approbation higher on the whole than that of the chief professional reviewer of the period.' When the happy days of youth are over, even the most genial and generous of minds are seldom able to enter into the strains of a new poet with that full and open delight which he awakens in the bosoms of the rising generation about him. Their deep and eager sympathies have already been drawn upon to an extent of which the prosaic part of the species can never have any conception; and when the fit of creative inspiration has subsided, they are apt to be rather cold critics even of their own noblest appeals to the simple primary feelings of their kind. Miss Seward's letter, on this occasion, has been since included in the printed collection of her correspondence; but perhaps the reader may form a sufficient notion of its tenor from the poet's answer—which, at all events, he will be amused to compare with the Introduction of 1830:—

To Miss Seward, Lichfield.

"Edinburgh, 21st March, 1805.

"My dear Miss Seward,

"I am truly happy that you found any amusement in the Lay of the Last Minstrel. It has great faults, of which no one can be more sensible than I am myself. Above all, it is deficient in that sort of continuity which a story ought to have, and which, were it to write again, I would endeavour to give it. But I began and wandered forward, like one in a pleasant country, getting to the top of one hill to see a prospect, and to the bottom of another to enjoy a shade, and what wonder if my course has been devious and desultory, and many of my excursions altogether unprofitable to the advance of my journey. The Dwarf Page is also an excrescence, and I plead guilty of all the censures concerning him. The truth is, he has a history, and it is this: The story of Gilpin Horner was told by an old gentleman to Lady Dalkeith, and she, much diverted with his actually believing so grotesque a tale, insisted that I should make it into a Border ballad. I don't know if ever you saw my lovely chieftainess—if you have, you must be aware that it is *impossible* for any one to refuse her request, as she has more of the angel in face and temper than any one alive; so that if she had asked me to write a ballad on a broomstick I must have attempted it. I began a few verses, to be called the Goblin Page; and they lay long by me, till the applause of some friends whose judgment I valued induced me to resume the poem; so on I wrote, knowing no more than the man in the moon how I was to end. At length the story appeared so uncouth, that I was fain to put it into the mouth of my old minstrel—lest the nature of it should be misunderstood, and I should be suspected of setting up a new school of poetry, instead of a feeble attempt to imitate the old. In the process of the romance, the page, intended to be a principal person in the work, contrived (from the baseness of his natural propensities I suppose) to slink down stairs into the kitchen, and now he must e'en abide there.

I mention these circumstances to you, and to any one whose applause I value, because I am unwilling you should suspect me of trifling with the public in *malice prepense*. As to the herd of critics, it is impossible for me to pay much attention to them; for, as they do not understand what I call poetry, we talk in a foreign language to each other. Indeed, many of these gentlemen appear to me to be a sort of tinkers, who, unable to *make* pots and pans, set up for *menders* of them, and, God knows, often make two holes in patching one. The sixth canto is altogether redundant; for the poem should certainly have closed with the union of the lovers, when the interest, if any, was at an end. But what could I do? I had my book and my page still on my hands, and must get rid of them at all events. Manage them as I would, their catastrophe must have been insufficient to occupy an entire canto; so I was fain to eke it out with the songs of the minstrels. I will now descend from the confessional, which I think I have occupied long enough for the patience of my fair confessor. I am happy you are disposed to give me absolution, notwithstanding all my sins.

"We have a new poet come forth amongst us—James Graham, author of a poem called the Sabbath, which I admire very much. If I can find an opportunity, I will send you a copy. Your affectionate humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

Mr. Ellis does not seem to have written at any length on the subject of the Lay, until he had perused the article in the Edinburgh Review. He then says,—

"Though I had previously made up my mind, or rather perhaps because I had done so, I was very anxious to compare my sentiments with those of the Edinburgh critic, and I found that in general we were perfectly agreed, though there are parts of the subject which we consider from very different points of view. Frere, with whom I had not any previous communication about it, agrees with me; and trusting very much to the justice of his poetical feelings, I feel some degree of confidence in my own judgment—though in opposition to Mr. Jeffrey, whose criticism I admire upon the whole extremely, as being equally acute and impartial, and as exhibiting the fairest judgment respecting the work that could be formed by the mere assistance of good sense and general taste, without that particular sort of taste which arises from the study of romantic compositions.

"What Frere and myself think, must be stated in the shape of a *hyper-criticism* —that is to say, of a review of the reviewer. We say that the Lay of the Last Minstrel is a work *sui generis*, written with the *intention* of exhibiting what our old romances do indeed exhibit in point of fact, but incidentally, and often without the wish, or rather contrary to the wish of the author;—viz. the manners of a particular age; and that therefore, if it does this truly, and is at the same time capable of keeping the steady attention of the reader, it is so far perfect. This is also a poem, and ought therefore to contain a great deal of poetical merit. This indeed it does by the admission of the reviewer, and it must be admitted that he has shown much real taste in estimating the most beautiful passages; but he finds fault with many of the lines as careless, with some as prosaic, and contends that the story is not sufficiently full of incident, and that one of the incidents is borrowed from a merely local superstition, &c. &c. To this we answer—1st, that if the Lay were intended to give *any* idea of the Minstrel compositions, it would have been a most glaring absurdity to have rendered the poetry as perfect and uniform as the works usually submitted to modern readers—and as in telling a story, nothing, or very little would be lost, though the merely connecting part of the narrative were in plain prose, the reader is certainly no loser by the incorrectness of the smaller parts. Indeed, who is so unequal as Dryden? It may be said that he was not intentionally so—but to be *very smooth* is very often to be *tame;* and though this should be admitted to be a less important fault than inequality in a common modern poem, there can be no doubt with respect to the necessity of subjecting yourself to the latter fault (if it is one) in an imitation of an ancient model. 2d, Though it is naturally to be expected that many readers will expect an almost infinite accumulation of incidents in a romance, this is only because readers in general have acquired all their ideas on the subject from the prose romances, which commonly contained a farrago of metrical stories. The *only* thing *essential* to a romance was, that it should be *believed* by the hearers. Not only tournaments, but battles are indeed accumulated in some of our ancient romances, because tradition had of course ascribed to every great conqueror a great number of conquests, and the minstrel would have been thought deficient if, in a warlike age, he had omitted any military event. But in other respects a paucity of incident is the general characteristic of our minstrel poems. 3d, With respect to the Goblin Page, it is by no means necessary that the superstition on which this is founded should be universally or even generally current. It is quite sufficient that it should exist somewhere in the neighbourhood of the castle where the scene is placed; and it cannot fairly be required that because the goblin is mischievous, all his tricks should be directed to the production of general evil. The old idea of goblins seems to have been, that they were essentially active, and careless about the mischief they produced, rather than providentially malicious.

"We therefore (*i.e.* Frere and myself) dissent from all the reviewer's objections to those circumstances in the narrative; but we entertain some doubts about the propriety of dwelling so long on the Minstrel songs in the last Canto. I say we *doubt*, because we are not aware of your having *ancient authority* for such a practice; but though the attempt was a bold one, inasmuch as it is not usual to add a whole canto to a story which is already finished, we are far from wishing that you had left it unattempted. I must tell you the answer of a philosopher (Sir Henry Englefield) to a friend of his who was criticising the obscurity of the language used in the Minstrel. 'I read little poetry, and often am in doubt whether I exactly understand the poet's meaning; but I found, after reading the Minstrel three times, that I understood it all perfectly.' 'Three times?' replied his friend. 'Yes, certainly; the first time, I discovered that there was a great deal of meaning in it; a second would have cleared it all up, but that I was run away with by the beautiful passages, which distracted my attention; the third time I skipped over these, and only attended to the scheme and structure of the poem, with which I am delighted.' At this conversation I was present, and though I could not help smiling at Sir Henry's mode of reading poetry, was pleased to see the degree of interest which he took in the narrative."*

I fancy most of my readers will agree with me in thinking that Sir Henry Englefield's method of reading and enjoying poetry was more to be envied than smiled at; and in doubting whether posterity will ever dispute about the "*propriety*" of the Canto which includes the Ballad of Rosabelle and the Requiem of Melrose. The friendly *hyper-critics* seem, I confess, to have judged the poem on principles not less pedantic, though of another kind of pedantry, than those which induced the *critic* to pronounce that its great prevailing blot originated in those "local partialities of the author," which had induced him to expect general interest and sympathy for such personages as his "Johnstones, Elliots, and Armstrongs." "Mr. Scott," said Jeffrey, "must either sacrifice his Border prejudices, or offend his readers in the other parts of the empire." It might have been answered by Ellis or Frere, that these Border clans figured after all on a scene at least as wide as the Troad; and that their chiefs were not perhaps inferior, either in rank or power, to the majority of the Homeric kings; but even the most zealous of its admirers among the professed literators of the day would hardly have ventured to suspect that the Lay of the Last Minstrel might have no prejudices to encounter but their own. It was destined to charm not only the British empire, but the whole civilized world; and had, in fact, exhibited a more Homeric genius than any regular epic since the days of Homer.

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* Mr. Morritt informs me, that he well remembers the dinner where this conversation occurred, and thinks Mr. Ellis has omitted in his report the best thing that Sir Harry Englefield said, in answer to one of the *Dii Minorum Gentium*, who made himself conspicuous by the severity of his censure on the verbal inaccuracies and careless lines of The Lay. "My dear sir," said the Baronet, "you remind me of a lecture on sculpture, which M. Falconet delivered at Rome, shortly after completing the model of his equestrian statue of Czar Peter, now at Petersburg. He took for his subject the celebrated horse of Marcus Aurelius in the Capitol, and pointed out as many faults in it as ever a jockey did in an animal he was about to purchase. But something came over him, vain as he was, when he was about to conclude the harangue. He took a long pinch of snuff, and eyeing his own faultless model, exclaimed with a sigh—*Cependant, Messieurs, il faut avouer que cette vilaine bête là est vivante, et que la mienne est morte.*"

> "It would be great affectation," says the Introduction of 1830, "not to own that the author expected some success from the Lay of the Last Minstrel. The attempt to return to a more simple and natural style of poetry was likely to be welcomed, at a time when the public had become tired of heroic hexameters, with all the buckram and binding that belong to them in modern days. But whatever might have been his expectations, whether moderate or unreasonable, the result left them far behind; for among those who smiled on the adventurous minstrel were numbered the great names of William Pitt and Charles Fox. Neither was the extent of the sale inferior to the character of the judges who received the poem with approbation. Upwards of 30,000 copies were disposed of by the trade; and the author had to perform a task difficult to human vanity, when called upon to make the necessary deductions from his own merits, in a calm attempt to account for its popularity."

Through what channel or in what terms Fox made known his opinion of the Lay, I have failed to ascertain. Pitt's praise, as expressed to his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, within a few weeks after the poem appeared, was repeated by her to Mr. William Stewart Rose, who, of course, communicated it forthwith to the author; and not long after, the Minister, in conversation with Scott's early friend the Right Hon. William Dundas, signified that it would give him pleasure to find some opportunity of advancing the fortunes of such a writer. "I remember," writes this gentleman, "at Mr. Pitt's table in 1805, the Chancellor asked me about you and your then situation, and after I had answered him, Mr. Pitt observed,—'he can't remain as he is,' and desired me to 'look to it.' He then repeated some lines from the Lay describing the old harper's embarrassment when asked to play, and said,—'This is a sort of thing which I might have expected in painting, but could never have fancied capable of being given in poetry.'"*

It is agreeable to know that this great statesman and accomplished

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*Letter dated April 25th, 1818, and indorsed by Scott, "*William Dundas—a very kind letter.*"

scholar awoke at least once from his supposed apathy as to the elegant literature of his own time.

The poet has under-estimated even the patent and tangible evidence of his success. The first edition of the Lay was a magnificent quarto, 750 copies; but this was soon exhausted, and there followed an octavo impression of 1500; in 1806, two more, one of 2000 copies, another of 2250; in 1807, a fifth edition of 2000, and a sixth of 3000; in 1808, 3550; in 1809, 3000—a small edition in quarto (the ballads and lyrical pieces being then annexed to it),—and another octavo edition of 3250; in 1811, 3000; in 1812, 3000; in 1816, 3000; in 1823, 1000. A fourteenth impression of 2000 foolscap appeared in 1825; and besides all this, before the end of 1836, 11,000 copies had gone forth in the collected editions of his poetical works. Thus, nearly forty-four thousand copies had been disposed of in this country, and by the legitimate trade alone, before he superintended the edition of 1830, to which his biographical introductions were prefixed. In the history of British Poetry nothing had ever equalled the demand for the Lay of the Last Minstrel.

The publishers of the first edition were Longman and Co. of London, and Archibald Constable and Co. of Edinburgh; which last house, however, had but a small share in the adventure. The profits were to be divided equally between the author and his publishers; and Scott's moiety was £169, 6s. Messrs. Longman, when a second edition was called for, offered £500 for the copyright; this was accepted, but they afterwards, as the Introduction says, "added £100 in their own unsolicited kindness. It was handsomely given to supply the loss of a fine horse which broke down suddenly while the author was riding with one of the worthy publishers." This worthy publisher was Mr. Owen Rees, and the gallant steed, to whom a desperate leap in the coursing-field proved fatal, was, I believe, *Captain*, the immediate successor of *Lenore*, as Scott's charger in the volunteer cavalry; *Captain* was replaced by *Lieutenant*. The author's whole share, then, in the profits of the Lay, came to £769, 6s.

Mr. Rees' visit to Ashestiel occurred in the autumn. The success of the poem had already been decisive; and fresh negotiations of more kinds than one were at this time in progress between Scott and various booksellers' houses both of Edinburgh and London.

CHAPTER XIV.

PARTNERSHIP WITH JAMES BALLANTYNE—LITERARY PROJECTS—EDITION OF THE BRITISH POETS—EDITION OF THE ANCIENT ENGLISH CHRONICLES, &c. &c.—EDITION OF DRYDEN UNDERTAKEN—EARL MOIRA COMMANDER OF THE FORCES IN SCOTLAND—SHAM BATTLES—ARTICLES IN THE EDINBURGH REVIEW—COMMENCEMENT OF WAVERLEY—LETTER ON OSSIAN—MR. SKENE'S REMINSCENCES OF ASHESTIEL—EXCURSION TO CUMBERLAND—ALARM OF INVASION—VISIT OF MR. SOUTHEY—CORRESPONDENCE ON DRYDEN WITH ELLIS AND WORDSWORTH—1805.

MR. BALLANTYNE, in his Memorandum, says, that very shortly after the publication of the Lay, he found himself obliged to apply to Mr

Scott for an advance of money; his own capital being inadequate for the business which had been accumulated on his press, in consequence of the reputation it had acquired for beauty and correctness of execution. Already, as we have seen, Ballantyne had received "a liberal loan;" "and now," says he, "being compelled, maugre all delicacy, to renew my application, he candidly answered that he was not quite sure that it would be prudent for him to comply, but in order to evince his entire confidence in me, he was willing to make a suitable advance to be admitted as a third sharer of my business" In truth, Scott now embarked in Ballantyne's concern almost the whole of the capital at his disposal, namely, the £5000 which he had received for Rosebank, and which he had a few months before designed to invest in the purchase of Broadmeadows. *Dis aliter visum.*

I have, many pages back, hinted my suspicion that he had formed some distant notion of such an alliance, as early as the date of Ballantyne's projected removal from Kelso to Edinburgh; and his Introduction to the Lay, in 1830, appears to leave little doubt that the hope of ultimately succeeding at the Bar had waxed very faint before the third volume of the Minstrelsy was brought out in 1803. When that hope ultimately vanished altogether, perhaps he himself would not have found it easy to tell. The most important of men's opinions, views, and projects, are sometimes taken up in so very gradual a manner, and after so many pauses of hesitation and of inward retractation, that they themselves are at a loss to trace in retrospect all the stages through which their minds have passed. We see plainly that Scott had never been fond of his profession, but that, conscious of his own persevering diligence, he ascribed his scanty success in it mainly to the prejudices of the Scotch solicitors against employing, in weighty causes at least, any barrister supposed to be strongly imbued with the love of literature; instancing the career of his friend Jeffrey as almost the solitary instance within his experience of such prejudices being entirely overcome. Had Scott, to his strong sense and dexterous ingenuity, his well-grounded knowledge of the jurisprudence of his country, and his admirable industry, added a brisk and ready talent for debate and declamation, I can have no doubt that his triumph over the prejudices alluded to would have been as complete as Mr. Jeffrey's; nor in truth do I much question that, had one really great and interesting case been submitted to his sole care and management, the result would have been to place his professional character for skill and judgment, and variety of resource, on so firm a basis, that even his rising celebrity as a man of letters could not have seriously disturbed it. Nay, I think it quite possible, that had he been intrusted with one such case after his reputation was established, and he had been compelled to do his abilities some measure of justice in his own secret estimate, he might have displayed very considerable powers even as a forensic speaker. But no opportunities of this engaging kind having ever been presented to him—after he had persisted for more than ten years in sweeping the floor of the Parliament House, without meeting with any employment but what would have suited the dullest drudge, and seen himself termly and yearly more and more distanced by contemporaries for whose general capacity he could have had little respect—

while, at the same time, he already felt his own position in the eyes of society at large to have been signally elevated in consequence of his extra-professional exertions—it is not wonderful that disgust should have gradually gained upon him, and that the sudden blaze and tumult of renown which surrounded the author of the Lay should have at last determined him to concentrate all his ambition on the pursuits which had alone brought him distinction. It ought to be mentioned that the business in George's Square, once extensive and lucrative, had dwindled away in the hands of his brother Thomas, whose varied and powerful talents were unfortunately combined with some tastes by no means favourable to the successful prosecution of his prudent father's vocation; so that very possibly even the humble employment of which, during his first years at the bar, Scott had at least a sure and respectable allowance, was by this time much reduced. I have not his fee-books of later date than 1803: it is, however, my impression from the whole tenor of his conversation and correspondence, that after that period he had not only not advanced as a professional man, but had been retrograding in nearly the same proportion that his literary reputation advanced.

We have seen that before he formed his contract with Ballantyne, he was in possession of such a fixed income as might have satisfied all his desires, had he not found his family increasing rapidly about him. Even as that was, with nearly if not quite £1000 per annum, he might perhaps have retired not only from the Bar, but from Edinburgh, and settled entirely at Ashestiel or Broadmeadows, without encountering what any man of his station and habits ought to have considered as an imprudent risk. He had, however, no wish to cut himself off from the busy and intelligent society to which he had been hitherto accustomed; and resolved not to leave the Bar until he should have at least used his best efforts for obtaining, in addition to his Shrievalty, one of those clerkships of the supreme court at Edinburgh, which are usually considered as honourable retirements for advocates who, at a certain standing, finally give up all hopes of reaching the dignity of the bench:

> "I determined," he says, "that literature should be my staff but not my crutch, and that the profits of my literary labour, however convenient otherwise, should not, if I could help it, become necessary to my ordinary expenses. Upon such a post an author might hope to retreat, without any perceptible alteration of circumstances, whenever the time should arrive that the public grew weary of his endeavours to please, or he himself should tire of the pen. I possessed so many friends capable of assisting me in this object of ambition, that I could hardly overrate my own prospects of obtaining the preferment to which I limited my wishes; and, in fact, I obtained, in no long period, the reversion of a situation which completely met them."*

The first notice of this affair that occurs in his correspondence, is in a note of Lord Dalkeith's, Feb. the 2d, 1805, in which his noble friend says, "My father desires me to tell you that he has had a communication with Lord Melville within these few days, and that he thinks *your business is in a good train, though not certain.*" I consider it as clear, then, that he began his negotiations concerning a seat at the clerk's table immediately after the Lay was published; and that their commencement had been resolved upon in the strictest connexion with his embarkation in the printing concern of James Ballantyne and Company. Such matters are seldom speedily arranged; but we shall find him in possession of his object before twelve months had elapsed.

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* Introduction to the Lay of the Last Minstrel—1830.

Mean while, his design of quitting the Bar was divulged to none but those immediately necessary for the purposes of his negotiation with the Government; and the nature of his connexion with the printing company remained, I believe, not only unknown, but for some years wholly unsuspected, by any of his daily companions except Mr. Erskine.

The forming of this commercial connexion was one of the most important steps in Scott's life. He continued bound by it during twenty years, and its influence on his literary exertions and his worldly fortunes was productive of much good and not a little evil. Its effects were in truth so mixed and balanced during the vicissitudes of a long and vigorous career, that I at this moment doubt whether it ought, on the whole, to be considered with more of satisfaction or of regret.

With what zeal he proceeded in advancing the views of the new copartnership, his correspondence bears ample evidence. The brilliant and captivating genius, now acknowledged universally, was soon discovered by the leading booksellers of the time to be united with such abundance of matured information in many departments, and, above all, with such indefatigable habits, as to mark him out for the most valuable workman they could engage for the furtherance of their schemes. He had, long before this, cast a shrewd and penetrating eye over the field of literary enterprise, and developed in his own mind the outlines of many extensive plans, which wanted nothing but the command of a sufficient body of able subalterns to be carried into execution with splendid success. Such of these as he grappled within his own person were, with rare exceptions, carried to a triumphant conclusion; but the alliance with Ballantyne soon infected him with the proverbial rashness of mere mercantile adventure—while, at the same time, his generous feelings for other men of letters, and his characteristic propensity to over-rate their talents, combined to hurry him and his friends into a multitude of arrangements, the results of which were often extremely embarrassing, and ultimately, in the aggregate, all but disastrous. It is an old saying, that wherever there is a secret there must be something wrong; and dearly did he pay the penalty for the mystery in which he had chosen to involve this transaction. It was his rule, from the beginning, that whatever he wrote or edited must be printed at that press; and had he catered for it only as author and sole editor, all had been well; but had the booksellers known his direct pecuniary interest in keeping up and extending the occupation of those types, they would have taken into account his lively imagination and sanguine temperament, as well as his taste and judgment, and considered, far more deliberately than they too often did, his multifarious recommendations of new literary schemes, coupled though these were with some dim understanding that, if the Ballantyne press were employed, his own literary skill would be at his friend's disposal for the general superintendence of the undertaking. On the other hand, Scott's suggestions were, in many cases, perhaps in the majority of them, conveyed through Ballantyne, whose habitual deference to his opinion induced him to advocate them with enthusiastic zeal; and the printer, who had thus pledged his personal authority for the merits of the proposed scheme, must have felt himself committed to the bookseller, and could hardly refuse with decency to take a certain share of the pecuniary risk, by allowing the time and method of his own payment to be regulated according to the employer's convenience. Hence, by degrees, was woven a web of entanglement from which neither Ballantyne nor his adviser had any means of escape, except only in that indomitable spirit, the mainspring of personal industry altogether unparalleled, to which, thus set in motion, the world owes its most gigantic monument of literary genius.

The following is the first letter I have found of Scott to his PARTNER. The Mr. Foster mentioned in the beginning of it was a literary gentleman who had proposed to take on himself a considerable share in the annotation of some of the new *editions* then on the carpet—among others, one of Dryden.

To Mr. James Ballantyne, Printer, Edinburgh.

"Asbestiel, April 12th, 1805.

"Dear Ballantyne,

"I have duly received your two favours—also Foster's. He still howls about the expense of printing, but I think we shall finally settle. His argument is that you print too fine, *alias* too dear. I intend to stick to my answer, that I know nothing of the matter; but that settle it how you and he will, it must be printed by you, or can be no concern of mine. This gives you an advantage in driving the bargain. As to every thing else, I think we shall do, and I will endeavour to set a few volumes agoing on the plan you propose.

"I have imagined a very superb work. What think you of a complete edition of British Poets, ancient and modern? Johnson's is imperfect and out of print; so is Bell's, which is a Lilliputian thing; and Anderson's, the most complete in point of number, is most contemptible in execution both of the editor and printer. There is a scheme for you! At least a hundred volumes, to be published at the rate of ten a-year. I cannot, however, be ready till midsummer. If the booksellers will give me a decent allowance per volume, say thirty guineas, I shall hold myself well paid on the *writing* hand. This is a dead secret.

"I think it quite right to let Doig* have a share of Thomson;† but he is hard and slippery, so settle your bargain fast and firm—no loop-holes! I am glad you have got some elbow-room at last. Cowan will come to, or we will find some fit place in time. If not, we *must* build—necessity has no law. I see nothing to hinder you from doing Tacitus with your correctness of eye, and I congratulate you on the fair prospect before us. When you have time you will make out a list of the debts to be discharged at Whitsunday, that we may see what cash we shall have in bank. Our book-keeping may be very simple—an accurate cash book and ledger is all that is necessary; and I think I know enough of the matter to assist at making the balance sheet.

"In short, with the assistance of a little cash I have no doubt things will go on *à merveille*. If you could take a little pleasuring, I wish you could come here and see us in all the glories of a Scottish spring. Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

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* A bookseller in Edinburgh.

† A projected edition of the Works of the author of the Seasons.

Scott opened forthwith his gigantic scheme of the British Poets to Constable, who entered into it with eagerness. They found presently that Messrs. Cadell and Davies, and some of the other London publishers, had a similar plan on foot, and after an unsuccessful negotiation with Mackintosh, were now actually treating with Campbell for the Biographical prefaces. Scott proposed that the Edinburgh and London houses should join in the adventure, and that the editorial task should be shared between himself and his brother poet. To this both Messrs. Cadell and Mr. Campbell warmly assented; but the design ultimately fell to the ground, in consequence of the booksellers refusing to admit certain works which both Scott and Campbell insisted upon. Such, and from analogous causes, has been the fate of various similar schemes both before and since. But the public had no trivial compensation upon the present occasion, since the failure of the original project led Mr. Campbell to prepare for the press those "Specimens of English Poetry" which he illustrated with sketches of biography and critical essays, alike honourable to his learning and taste; while Scott, Mr. Foster ultimately standing off, took on himself the whole burden of a new edition, as well as biography, of Dryden. The body of booksellers mean while combined in what they still called a *general edition* of the English Poets, under the superintendence of one of their own Grub-street vassals, Mr. Alexander Chalmers.

Precisely at the time when Scott's poetical ambition had been stimulated by the first outburst of universal applause, and when he was forming those engagements with Ballantyne which involved so large an accession of literary labours, as well as of pecuniary cares and responsibilities, a fresh impetus was given to the volunteer mania in Scotland, by the appointment of the late Earl of Moira (afterwards Marquis of Hastings) to the chief military command in that part of the empire. The Earl had married, the year before, a Scottish Peeress, the Countess of Loudon, and entered with great zeal into her sympathy with the patriotic enthusiasm of her countrymen. Edinburgh was converted into a camp: independently of a large garrison of regular troops, nearly 10,000 fencibles and volunteers were almost constantly under arms. The lawyer wore his uniform under his gown; the shopkeeper measured out his wares in scarlet; in short, the citizens of all classes made more use for several months of the military than of any other dress; and the new commander-in-chief consulted equally his own gratification and theirs, by devising a succession of manœuvres which presented a vivid image of the art of war conducted on a large and scientific scale. In the *sham battles* and *sham sieges* of 1805, Craigmillar, Preston, Gilmerton, the Crosscauseway, and other formidable positions in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, were the scenes of many a dashing assault and resolute defence; and occasionally the spirits of the mock combatants—English and Scotch, or Lowland and Highland—became so much excited that there was some difficulty in preventing the rough mockery of warfare from passing into its realities. The Highlanders, in particular, were very hard to be dealt with; and once, at least, Lord Moira was forced to alter at the eleventh hour his programme of battle, because a battalion of kilted fencibles could not or would not understand that it was their duty to be beat. Such days as these must have been more nobly spirit-stirring than even the best specimens of the fox-chase. To the end of his life Scott delighted to recall the details of their countermarches, ambuscades, charges, and pursuits, and in all of these his associates of the Light-Horse agree that none figured more advantageously than himself. Yet these military interludes seem only to have whetted his appetite for closet work. Indeed, nothing but a complete publication of his letters could give an adequate notion of the facility with which he already combined the conscientious magistrate, the martinet quartermaster, the speculative printer, and the ardent lover of literature for its own sake. A few specimens must suffice.

To George Ellis, Esq.

"Edinburgh, May 26, 1805.

"My dear Ellis,

"Your silence has been so long and *opinionative*, that I am quite authorized, as a Border ballad-monger, to address you with a—'Sleep you, or wake you?' What has become of the Romances, which I have expected as anxiously as my neighbours around me have watched for the rain, which was to bring the grass, which was to feed the new-calved cows, and to as little purpose, for both Heaven and you have obstinately delayed your favours. After idling away the spring months at Ashestiel, I am just returned to idle away the summer here, and I have lately lighted upon rather an interesting article in your way. If you will turn to Barbour's Bruce (Pinkerton's edition, p. 66), you will find that the Lord of Lorn, seeing Bruce covering the retreat of his followers, compares him to Gow MacMorn (Macpherson's Gaul the son of Morni.) This similitude appears to Barbour a disparagement, and he says, the Lord of Lorn might more mannerly have compared the King to Gadefeir de Lawryss, who was with the mighty Duke Betys when he assailed the forayers in Gadderis, and who in the retreat did much execution among the pursuers; overthrowing Alexander and Thelomier and Danklin, although he was at length slain; and here, says Barbour, the resemblance fails. Now, by one of those chances which favour the antiquary once in an age, a single copy of the romance alluded to has been discovered, containing the whole history of this Gadefeir, who had hitherto been a stumbling-block to the critics. The book was printed by Arbuthnot, who flourished at Edinburgh in the seventeenth century. It is a metrical romance, called 'The Buik of the Most Noble and Vauliant Conquerour, Alexander the Grit.' The first part is called the Foray of Gadderis, an incident supposed to have taken place while Alexander was besieging Tyre; Gadefeir is one of the principal champions, and after exerting himself in the manner mentioned by Barbour, unhorsing the persons whom he named, he is at length slain by Emynedus, the Earl-Marshal of the Macedonian conqueror. The second part is called the Avowis of Alexander, because it introduces the oaths which he and others made to the peacock in the 'chalmer of Venus,' and gives an account of the mode in which they accomplished them. The third is the Great Battell of Effesoun, in which Porus makes a distinguished figure. This you are to understand is not *the* Porus of India, but one of his sons. The work is in decided Scotch, and adds something to our ancient poetry, being by no means despicable in point of composition. The author says he translated it from the *Franch*, or *Romance*, and that he accomplished his work in 1438-9. Barbour must therefore have quoted from the French Alexander, and perhaps his praises of the work excited the Scottish translator. Will you tell me what you think of all this, and whether any transcripts will be of use to you? I am pleased with the accident of its casting up, and hope it may prove the forerunner of more discoveries in the dusty and ill-arranged libraries of our country gentlemen.

"I hope you continue to like the Lay. I have had a flattering assurance of Mr. Fox's approbation, mixed with a censure of my eulogy on the Viscount of Dundee. Although my Tory principles prevent my coinciding with his political opinions, I am very proud of his approbation in a literary sense.

Charlotte joins me, &c. &c. W. S."

In his answer, Ellis says:—

"Longman lately informed me that you have projected a General Edition of our Poets. I expressed to him my anxiety that the booksellers, who certainly can ultimately sell what they please, should for once undertake something calculated to please intelligent readers, and that they should confine themselves to the selection of paper, types, &c. (which they possibly may understand), and by no means interfere with the literary part of the business, which, if popularity be the object, they must leave exclusively to you. I am talking, as you perceive, about your plan, without knowing its extent, or any of its details; for these, therefore, I will wait—after confessing that, much as I wish for a *corpus poetarum*, edited as you would edit it, I should like still better another Minstrel Lay by the last and best Minstrel; and the general demand for the poem seems to prove that the public are of my opinion. If, however, you don't feel disposed to take a second ride on Pegasus, why not undertake something far less *infra dig.* than a mere edition of our poets? Why not undertake what Gibbon once undertook—an edition of our historians? I have never been able to look at a volume of the Benedictine edition of the early French historians without envy."

Mr. Ellis appears to have communicated all his notions on this subject to Messrs. Longman, for Scott writes to Ballantyne (Ashestiel, September 5):—

"I have had a visit from Rees yesterday. He is anxious about a *corpus historiarum*, or full edition of the Chronicles of England, an immense work. I proposed to him beginning with Hollinshed, and I think the work will be secured for your press. I congratulate you on Clarendon, which, under Thomson's direction, will be a glorious publication."*

The printing-office in the Canongate was by this time in very great request; and the letter I have been quoting contains evidence that the partners had already found it necessary to borrow fresh capital—on the personal security, it need not be added, of Scott himself. He says:

"As I have full confidence in your applying the accommodation received from Sir William Forbes in the most convenient and prudent manner, I have no hesitation to return the bonds subscribed as you desire. This will put you in cash for great matters."

But to return. To Ellis himself, he says:—

"I have had booksellers here in the plural number. You have set little Rees's head agog about the Chronicles, which would be an admirable work, but should, I think, be edited by an Englishman who can have access to the MSS. of Oxford and Cambridge, as one cannot trust much to the correctness of printed copies. I will, however, consider the matter, so far as a decent edition of Hollinshed is concerned, in case my time is not otherwise taken up. As for the British Poets, my plan was greatly too liberal to stand the least chance of being adopted by the trade at large, as I wished them to begin with Chaucer. The fact is, I never expected they would agree to it. The Benedictines had an infinite advantage over us in that *esprit du corps* which led them to set labour and expense at defiance, when the honour of the order was at stake. Would to God your English Universities, with their huge endowments and the number of learned men to whom they give competence and leisure, would but imitate the monks in their literary plans. My present employment is an edition of John Dryden's Works, which is already gone to press. As for riding on Pegasus, depend upon it, I will never again cross him in a serious way, unless I should by some strange accident reside so long in the Highlands, and make myself master of their ancient manners, so as to paint them with some degree of accuracy in a kind of *companion* to the Minstrel Lay. . . . . . I am interrupted by the arrival of two *gentil bachelors*, whom, like the Count of Artois,

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*An edition of Clarendon had been, it seems, contemplated by Scott's friend, Mr. Thomas Thomson.

I must despatch upon some adventure till dinner time. Thank Heaven, that will not be difficult, for although there are neither dragons nor boars in the vicinity, and men above six feet are not only scarce, but pacific in their habits, yet we have a curious breed of wild-cats who have eaten all Charlotte's chickens, and against whom I have declared a war at *outrance*, in which the assistance of these *gentes demoiseaux* will be fully as valuable as that of Don Quixote to Pentalopin with the naked arm. So, if Mrs. Ellis takes a fancy for cat-skin fur, now is the time."

Already, then, he was seriously at work on Dryden. During the same summer, he drew up for the Edinburgh Review an admirable article on Todd's Edition of Spenser; another on Godwin's Fleetwood; a third, on the Highland Society's Report concerning the Poems of Ossian; a fourth, on Johnes's Translation of Froissart; a fifth, on Colonel Thornton's Sporting Tour—and a sixth, on some cookery books—the two last being excellent specimens of his humour. He had, besides, a constant succession of minor cares in the superintendence of multifarious works passing through the Ballantyne press. But there is yet another important item to be included in the list of his literary labours of this period. The General Preface to his Novels informs us, that "about 1805" he wrote the opening chapters of Waverley; and the second title, *'Tis Sixty Years since*, selected, as he says, "that the actual date of publication might correspond with the period in which the scene was laid," leaves no doubt that he had begun the work so early in 1805 as to contemplate publishing it before Christmas.[*] He adds, in the same page, that he was induced, by the favourable reception of the Lady of the Lake, to think of giving some of his recollections of Highland scenery and customs in prose; but this is only one instance of the inaccuracy as to matters of date which pervades all those delightful Prefaces. The Lady of the Lake was not published until five years after the first chapters of Waverley were written; its success, therefore, could have had no share in suggesting the original design of a Highland novel, though no doubt it principally influenced him to take up that design after it had been long suspended, and almost forgotten. Thus early, then, had Scott meditated deeply such a portraiture of Highland manners as might "make a sort of companion" to that of the old Border life in the "Minstrel Lay;" and he had probably begun and suspended his Waverley, before he expressed to Ellis his feeling that he ought to reside for some considerable time in the country to be delineated, before seriously committing himself in the execution of such a task.

"Having proceeded," he says, "as far as I think the seventh chapter, I showed my work to a critical friend, whose opinion was unfavourable; and having then some poetical reputation, I was unwilling to risk the loss of it by attempting a new style of composition. I, therefore, then threw aside the work I had commenced, without either reluctance or remonstrance. I ought to add, that though my ingenious friend's sentence was afterwards reversed, on an appeal to the public, it cannot be considered as any imputation on his good taste; for the specimen subjected to his criticism did not extend beyond the departure of the hero for Scotland, and consequently had not entered upon the part of the story which was finally found most interesting."

A letter to be quoted under the year 1810 will, I believe, satisfy the reader that the first critic of the opening chapters of Waverley was William Erskine.

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[*] I have ascertained, since this page was written, that a small part of the MS. of Waverley is on paper bearing the watermark of 1805—the rest on paper of 1813.

The following letter must have been written in the course of this autumn. It is in every respect a very interesting one; but I introduce it here as illustrating the course of his reflections on Highland subjects in general, at the time when the first outlines both of the Lady of the Lake and Waverley must have been floating about in his mind:—

To Miss Seward, Lichfield.

"Ashestiel, [1806.]

"My dear Miss Seward,

"You recall to me some very pleasant feelings of my boyhood, when you ask my opinion of Ossian. His works were first put into my hands by old Dr. Blacklock, a blind poet, of whom you may have heard; he was the worthiest and kindest of human beings, and particularly delighted in encouraging the pursuits, and opening the minds, of the young people by whom he was surrounded. I, though at the period of our intimacy a very young boy, was fortunate enough to attract his notice and kindness; and if I have been at all successful in the paths of literary pursuit, I am sure I owe much of that success to the books with which he supplied me, and his own instructions. Ossian and Spenser were two books which the good old bard put into my hands, and which I devoured rather than perused. Their tales were for a long time so much my delight, that I could repeat without remorse whole cantos of the one and duans of the other; and woe to the unlucky wight who undertook to be my auditor, for in the height of my enthusiasm I was apt to disregard all hints that my recitations became tedious. It was a natural consequence of progress in taste that my fondness for these authors should experience some abatement. Ossian's poems, in particular, have more charms for youth than for a more advanced stage. The eternal repetition of the same ideas and imagery, however beautiful in themselves, is apt to pall upon a reader whose taste has become somewhat fastidious; and, although I agree entirely with you that the question of their authenticity ought not to be confounded with that of their literary merit, yet scepticism on that head takes away their claim for indulgence as the productions of a barbarous and remote age; and, what is perhaps more natural, it destroys that feeling of reality which we should otherwise combine with our sentiments of admiration. As for the great dispute, I should be no Scottishman if I had not very attentively considered it at some period of my studies; and, indeed, I have gone some lengths in my researches, for I have beside me translations of some twenty or thirty of the unquestioned originals of Ossian's poems. After making every allowance for the disadvantages of a literal translation, and the possible debasement which those *now* collected may have suffered in the great and violent change which the Highlands have undergone since the researches of Macpherson, I am compelled to admit that incalculably the greater part of the English Ossian must be ascribed to Macpherson himself, and that his whole introductions, notes, &c. &c. are an absolute tissue of forgeries.

"In all the ballads I ever saw or could hear of, Fin and Ossian are described as natives of Ireland, although it is not unusual for the reciters sturdily to maintain that this is a corruption of the text. In point of merit I do not think these Gaelic poems much better than those of the Scandinavian Scalds; they are very unequal, often very vigorous and pointed, often drivelling and crawling in the very extremity of tenuity. The manners of the heroes are those of Celtic savages; and I could point out twenty instances in which Macpherson has very cunningly adopted the beginning, the names, and the leading incidents, &c. of an old tale, and dressed it up with all those ornaments of sentiment and sentimental manners, which first excite our surprise, and afterwards our doubt of its authenticity. The Highlanders themselves, recognising the leading features of tales they had heard in infancy, with here and there a tirade really taken from an old poem, were readily seduced into becoming champions for the authenticity of the poems. How many people not particularly addicted to poetry, who may have read Chevy-Chase in the nursery or at school, and never since met with the ballad, might be imposed upon by a new Chevy-Chase, bearing no resemblance to the old one, save in here and there a stanza or an incident? Besides, there is something in the severe judgment passed on my countrymen—'that if they do not prefer Scotland to truth, they will always prefer it to enquiry.' When once the Highlanders had adopted the poems of Ossian as an article of national faith, you would far sooner have got them to disavow the Scripture than to abandon a line of the contested tales. *Only* they all allow that Macpherson's translation is very unfaithful, and some pretend to say inferior to the original; by which they can only mean, if they mean any thing, that they miss the charms of the rhythm and vernacular idiom, which pleases the Gaelic natives; for in the real attributes of poetry, Macpherson's version is far superior to any I ever saw of the fragments which he seems to have used.

"The Highland Society have lately set about investigating, or rather, I should say, collecting materials to defend, the authenticity of Ossian. Those researches have only proved that there were no real originals—using that word as is commonly understood—to be found for them. The oldest tale they have found seems to be that of Darthula; but it is perfectly different, both in diction and story, from that of Macpherson. It is, however, a beautiful specimen of Celtic poetry, and shows that it contains much which is worthy of preservation. Indeed, how should it be otherwise, when we know that, till about fifty years ago, the Highlands contained a race of hereditary poets? Is it possible to think, that, among perhaps many hundreds, who for such a course of centuries have founded their reputation and rank on practising the art of poetry in a country where the scenery and manners gave such effect and interest and imagery to their productions, there should not have been some who attained excellence? In searching out those genuine records of the Celtic Muse, and preserving them from oblivion, with all the curious information which they must doubtless contain, I humbly think our Highland antiquaries would merit better of their country, than by confining their researches to the fantastic pursuit of a chimera.

"I am not to deny that Macpherson's inferiority in other compositions is a presumption that he did not actually compose these poems. But we are to consider his advantage when on his own ground. Macpherson was a Highlander, and had his imagination fired with the charms of Celtic poetry from his very infancy. We know, from constant experience, that most Highlanders, after they have become complete masters of English, continue to *think* in their own language; and it is to me demonstrable that Macpherson *thought* almost every word of Ossian in Gaelic, although he wrote it down in English. The specimens of his early poetry which remain are also deeply tinged with the peculiarities of the Celtic diction and character; so that, in fact, he might be considered as a Highland poet, even if he had not left us some Earse translations (or originals of Ossian) unquestionably written by himself. These circumstances gave a great advantage to him in forming the style of Ossian, which, though exalted and modified according to Macpherson's own ideas of modern taste, is in great part cut upon the model of the tales of the Sennachies and Bards. In the translation of Homer, he not only lost these advantages, but the circumstances on which they were founded were a great detriment to his undertaking; for although such a dress was appropriate and becoming for Ossian, few people cared to see their old Grecian friend disguised in a tartan plaid and philabeg. In a word, the style which Macpherson had formed, however admirable in a Highland tale, was not calculated for translating Homer; and it was a great mistake in him, excited, however, by the general applause his first work received, to suppose that there was any thing homogeneous betwixt his own ideas and those of Homer. Macpherson, in his way, was certainly a man of high talents, and his poetic powers as honourable to his country, as the use which he made of them, and I fear his personal character in other respects, was a discredit to it.

"Thus I have given you with the utmost sincerity my creed on the great national question of Ossian; it has been formed after much deliberation and enquiry. I have had for some time thoughts of writing a Highland poem, somewhat in the style of the Lay, giving as far as I can a real picture of what that enthusiastic race actually were before the destruction of their patriarchal government. It is true I have not quite the same facilities as in describing Border manners, where I am, as they say, more at home. But to balance my comparative deficiency in knowledge of Celtic manners, you are to consider that I have from my youth delighted in all the Highland traditions which I could pick from the old Jacobites who used to frequent my father's house; and this will, I hope, make some amends for my having less immediate opportunities of research than in the Border tales.

"Agreeably to your advice, I have actually read over Madoc a second time, and I confess have seen much beauty which escaped me in the first perusal. *Yet* (which yet, by the way, is almost as vile a monosyllable as *but*) I cannot feel quite the interest I would wish to do. The difference of character which you notice, reminds me of what by Ben Jonson and other old comedians were called *humours*, which consisted rather in the personification of some individual passion or propensity than of an actual individual man. Also, I cannot give up my objection that what was strictly true of Columbus, becomes an unpleasant falsehood when told of some one else. Suppose I was to write a fictitious book of travels, I should certainly do ill to copy exactly the incidents which befel Mungo Park or Bruce of Kinnaird. What was true of them would incontestably prove at once the falsehood and plagiarism of my supposed journal. It is not but what the incidents are natural—but it is their having already happened which strikes us when they are transferred to imaginary persons. Could any one bear the story of a second city being taken by a wooden horse?

"Believe me, I shall not be within many miles of Lichfield, without paying my personal respects to you; and yet I should not do it in prudence, because I am afraid you have formed a higher opinion of me than I deserve; you would expect to see a person who had dedicated himself much to literary pursuits, and you would find me a rattle-sculled half-lawyer, half-sportsman, through whose head a regiment of horse has been exercising since he was five years old; half-educated, half-crazy, as his friends sometimes tell him; half every thing, but *entirely* Miss Seward's much obliged, affectionate, and faithful servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

His correspondence shows how largely he was exerting himself all this while in the service of authors less fortunate than himself. James Hogg, among others, continued to occupy from time to time his attention; and he assisted regularly and assiduously throughout this and the succeeding year Mr. Robert Jameson, an industrious and intelligent antiquary, who had engaged in editing a collection of ancient popular ballads before the third volume of the Minstrelsy appeared, and who at length published his very curious work in 1807. Mean time, Ashestiel, in place of being less resorted to by literary strangers than Lasswade cottage had been, shared abundantly in the fresh attractions of the Lay, and "booksellers in the plural number" were preceded and followed by an endless variety of enthusiastic "gentil bachelors," whose main temptation from the south had been the hope of seeing the Borders in company with their Minstrel. He still writes of himself as "idling away his hours;" he had already learned to appear as if he were doing so to all who had no particular right to confidence respecting the details of his privacy.

But the most agreeable of all his visitants were his own old familiar friends, and one of these has furnished me with a sketch of the autumn life of Ashestiel of which I shall now avail myself. Scott's invitation was in these terms:—

To James Skene, Esq. of Rubislaw.

"Ashestiel, 18th August, 1805.

"Dear Skene,

"I have prepared another edition of the Lay, 1500 strong, moved thereunto by the faith, hope, and charity of the London booksellers. . . . . If you could, in the interim, find a moment to spend here, you know the way, and the ford is where it was; which, by the way, is more than I expected after Saturday last, the most dreadful storm of thunder and lightning I ever witnessed. The lightning broke repeatedly in our immediate vicinity, *i. e.* betwixt us and the Peel Wood. Charlotte resolved to die in bed like a good Christian. The servants said it was the preface to the end of the world, and I was the only person that maintained my character for stoicism, which I assure you had some merit, as I had no doubt that we were in real danger. It was accompanied with a flood so tremendous that I would have given five pounds you had been here to make a sketch of it. The little Glenkinnon brook was impassable for all the next day, and indeed I have been obliged to send all hands to repair the ford, which was converted into a deep pool. Believe me ever yours affectionately,

W. S."

Mr. Skene says,—

"I well remember the ravages of the storm and flood described in this letter. The ford of Ashestiel was never a good one, and for some time after this it remained not a little perilous. He was himself the first to attempt the passage on his favourite black horse *Captain*, who had scarcely entered the river when he plunged beyond his depth, and had to swim to the other side with his burden. It requires a good horseman to swim a deep and rapid stream, but he trusted to the vigour of his steady trooper, and in spite of his lameness kept his seat manfully. A cart bringing a new kitchen *range* (as I believe the grate for that service is technically called) was shortly after upset in this ugly ford. The horse and cart were with difficulty got out, but the grate remained for some time in the middle of the stream to do duty as a horse-trap, and furnish subject for many a good joke when Mrs. Scott happened to complain of the imperfection of her kitchen appointments."

Mr. Skene soon discovered an important change which had recently been made in his friend's distribution of his time. Previously it had been his custom, whenever professional business or social engagements occupied the middle part of his day, to seize some hours for study after he was supposed to have retired to bed. His physician suggested that this was very likely to aggravate his nervous headaches, the only malady he was subject to in the prime of his manhood; and, contemplating with steady eye a course not only of unremitting but of increasing industry, he resolved to reverse his plan, and carried his purpose into execution with unflinching energy. In short, he had now adopted the habits in which, with very slender variation, he ever after persevered when in the country. He rose by five o'clock, lit his own fire when the season required one, and shaved and dressed with great deliberation—for he was a very martinet as to all but the mere coxcombries of the toilet, not abhorring effeminate dandyism itself so cordially as the slightest approach to personal slovenliness, or even those "bed-gown and slipper tricks," as he called them, in which literary men are so apt to indulge. Arrayed in his shooting-jacket, or whatever dress he meant to use till dinner time, he was seated at his desk by six o'clock, all his papers arranged before him in the most accurate order, and his books of reference marshalled around him on the floor, while at least one favourite dog lay watching his eye just beyond the line of circumvallation. Thus, by the time the family assembled for breakfast between nine and ten, he had done enough (in his own language) "*to break the neck of the day's work.*" After breakfast a couple of hours more were given to his solitary tasks, and by noon he was, as he used to say, "his own man." When the weather was bad, he would labour incessantly all the morning; but the general rule was to be out and on horseback by one o'clock at the latest; while, if any more distant excursion had been proposed over-night, he was ready to start on it by ten; his occasional rainy days of unintermitted study forming, as he said, a fund in his favour, out of which he was entitled to draw for accommodation whenever the sun shone with special brightness.

It was another rule, that every letter he received should be answered that same day. Nothing else could have enabled him to keep abreast with the flood of communications that in the sequel put his good nature to the severest test—but already the demands on him in this way also were numerous; and he included attention to them among the necessary business which must be despatched before he had a right to close his writing-box, or as he phrased it, "to say *out damned spot*, and be a gentleman." In turning over his enormous mass of correspondence, I have almost invariably found some indication that, when a letter had remained more than a day or two unanswered, it had been so because he found occasion for enquiry or deliberate consideration.

I ought not to omit that in those days Scott was far too zealous a dragoon not to take a principal share in the stable duty. Before beginning his desk-work in the morning, he uniformly visited his favourite steed, and neither *Captain* nor *Lieutenant*, nor the lieutenant's successor, *Brown Adam* (so called after one of the heroes of the Minstrelsy), liked to be fed except by him. The latter charger was indeed altogether intractable in other hands, though in his the most submissive of faithful allies. The moment he was bridled and saddled, it was the custom to open the stable door as a signal that his master expected him, when he immediately trotted to the side of the *leaping-on-stone*, of which Scott from his lameness found it convenient to make use, and stood there, silent and motionless as a rock, until he was fairly in his seat, after which he displayed his joy by neighing triumphantly through a brilliant succession of curvettings. Brown Adam never suffered himself to be backed but by his master. He broke, I believe, one groom's arm and another's leg in the rash attempt to tamper with his dignity.

Camp was at this time the constant parlour dog. He was very handsome, very intelligent, and naturally very fierce, but gentle as a lamb among the children. As for the more locomotive Douglas and Percy, he kept one window of his study open, whatever might be the state of the weather, that they might leap out and in as the fancy moved them. He always talked to Camp as if he understood what was said—and the animal certainly did understand not a little of it; in particular, it seemed as if he perfectly comprehended on all occasions that his master considered him as a sensible and steady friend, the greyhounds as volatile young creatures whose freaks must be borne with.

"Every day," says Mr. Skene, "we had some hours of coursing with the greyhounds, or riding at random over the hills, or of spearing salmon in the Tweed by sunlight: which last sport, moreover, we often renewed at night by the help of torches. This amusement of *burning the water*, as it is called, was not without some hazard, for the large salmon generally lie in the pools, the depths of which it is not easy to estimate with precision by torchlight,—so that not unfrequently, when the sportsman makes a determined thrust at a fish apparently within reach, his eye has grossly deceived him, and instead of the point of the weapon encountering the prey, he finds himself launched with corresponding vehemence heels over head into the pool, both spear and salmon gone, the torch thrown out by the concussion of the boat, and quenched in the stream, while the boat itself has of course receded to some distance. I remember the first time I accompanied our friend he went right over the gunwale in this manner, and had I not accidentally been close at his side, and made a successful grasp at the skirt of his jacket as he plunged overboard, he must at least have had an awkward dive for it. Such are the contingencies of *burning the water*. The pleasures consist in being penetrated with cold and wet, having your shins broken against the stones in the dark, and perhaps mastering one fish out of every twenty you take aim at."

In all these amusements, but particularly in the *burning of the water*, Scott's most regular companion at this time was John Lord Somerville, who united with many higher qualities a most enthusiastic love for such sports, and consummate address in the prosecution of them. This amiable nobleman then passed his autumns at his pretty seat of Allwyn, or the Pavilion, situated on the Tweed, some eight or nine miles below Ashestiel. They interchanged visits almost every week; and Scott did not fail to profit largely by his friend's matured and well-known skill in every department of the science of rural economy. He always talked of him, in particular, as his master in the art of planting.

The laird of Rubislaw seldom failed to spend a part of the summer and autumn at Ashestiel, as long as Scott remained there, and during these visits they often gave a wider scope to their expeditions.

"Indeed," says Mr. Skene, "there are few scenes at all celebrated either in the history, tradition, or romance of the Border counties, which we did not explore together in the course of our rambles. We traversed the entire vales of the Yarrow and Ettrick, with all their sweet tributary glens, and never failed to find a hearty welcome from the farmers at whose houses we stopped, either for dinner or for the night. He was their chief-magistrate, extremely popular in that official capacity, and nothing could be more gratifying than the frank and hearty reception which every where greeted our arrival, however unexpected. The exhilarating air of the mountains, and the healthy exercise of the day, secured our relishing homely fare, and we found inexhaustible entertainment in the varied display of character which the affability of *the Sheriff* drew forth on all occasions in genuine breadth and purity. The beauty of the scenery gave full employment to my pencil, with the free and frequent exercise of which he never seemed to feel impatient. He was at all times ready and willing to alight when any object attracted my notice, and used to seat himself beside me on the brae to con over some ballad appropriate to the occasion, or narrate the tradition of the glen—sometimes, perhaps, to note a passing idea in his pocketbook; but this was rare, for in general he relied with confidence on the great storehouse of his memory. And much amusement we had, as you may suppose, in talking over the different incidents, conversations, and traits of manners that had occurred at the last hospitable fireside where we had mingled with the natives. Thus the minutes glided away until my sketch was complete, and then we mounted again with fresh alacrity.

"These excursions derived an additional zest from the uncertainty that often attended the issue of our proceedings; for, following the game started by the dogs, our unfailing comrades, we frequently got entangled and bewildered among the hills, until we had to trust to mere chance for the lodging of the night. Adventures of this sort were quite to his taste, and the more for the perplexities which on such occasions befell our attendant squires, mine a lanky Savoyard, his a portly Scotch butler, both of them uncommonly bad horsemen, and both equally sensitive about their personal dignity, which the ruggedness of the ground often made it a matter of some difficulty for either of them to maintain, but more especially for my poor foreigner, whose seat resembled that of a pair of compasses astride. Scott's heavy lumbering *beauffetier* had provided himself against the mountain showers with a huge cloak, which, when the cavalcade were at gallop, streamed at full stretch from his shoulders, and kept flapping in the other's face, who, having more than enough to do in preserving his own equilibrium, could not think of attempting at any time to control the pace of his steed, and had no relief but fuming and *pesting* at the *sacré manteau*, in language happily unintelligible to its wearer. Now and then some ditch or turf-fence rendered it indispensable to adventure on a leap, and no farce could have been more amusing than the display of politeness which then occurred between these worthy equestrians, each courteously declining in favour of his friend the honour of the first experiment, the horses fretting impatient beneath them, and the dogs clamouring encouragement. The horses generally terminated the dispute by renouncing allegiance, and springing forward without waiting the pleasure of the riders, who had to settle the matter with their saddles as they best could.

"One of our earliest expeditions was to visit the wild scenery of the mountainous tract above Moffat, including the cascade of the 'Grey Mare's Tail,' and the dark tarn called 'Loch Skene.' In our ascent to the lake we got completely bewildered in the thick fog which generally envelopes the rugged features of that lonely region; and, as we were groping through the maze of bogs, the ground gave way, and down went horse and horsemen pell-mell into a slough of peaty mud and black water, out of which, entangled as we were with our plaids and floundering nags, it was no easy matter to get extricated. Indeed, unless we had prudently left our gallant steeds at a farm-house below, and borrowed hill ponies for the occasion, the result might have been worse than laughable. As it was, we rose like the spirits of the bog, covered *cap-à-pie* with slime, to free themselves from which, our wily ponies took to rolling about on the heather, and we had nothing for it but following their example. At length as we approached the gloomy loch, a huge eagle heaved himself from the margin and rose right over us, screaming his scorn of the intruders; and altogether it would be impossible to picture any thing more desolately savage than the scene which opened, as if raised by enchantment on purpose to gratify the poet's eye; thick folds of fog rolling incessantly over the face of the inky waters, but rent asunder now in one direction, and then in another—so as to afford us a glimpse of some projecting rock or naked point of land, or island bearing a few scraggy stumps of pine—and then closing again in universal darkness upon the cheerless waste. Much of the scenery of Old Mortality was drawn from that day's ride.

"It was also in the course of this excursion that we encountered that amusing personage introduced into Guy Mannering as 'Tod Gabbie,' though the appellation by which he was known in the neighbourhood was 'Tod Willie.' He was one of those itinerants who gain a subsistence among the moorland farmers by relieving them of foxes, polecats, and the like depredators—a half-witted, stuttering, and most original creature.

"Having explored all the wonders of Moffatdale, we turned ourselves towards *Blackhouse Tower*, to visit Scott's worthy acquaintances the Laidlaws, and reached it after a long and intricate ride, having been again led off our course by the greyhounds, who had been seduced by a strange dog that joined company, to engage in full pursuit upon the tract of what we presumed to be either a fox or a roe-deer. The chase was protracted and perplexing, from the mist that skirted the hill tops; but at length we reached the scene of slaughter, and were much distressed to find that a stately old he-goat had been the victim. He seemed to have fought a stout battle for his life, but now lay mangled in the midst of his panting enemies, who betrayed, on our approach, strong consciousness of delinquency and apprehension of the lash, which was administered accordingly to soothe the manes of the luckless Capricorn—though, after all, the dogs were not so much to blame in mistaking his game flavour, since the fogs must have kept him out of view till the last moment. Our visit to Blackhouse was highly interesting;—the excellent old tenant being still in life, and the whole family group presenting a perfect picture of innocent and simple happiness, while the animated, intelligent, and original conversation of our friend William was quite charming.

"Sir Adam Fergusson and the Ettrick Shepherd were of the party that explored Loch Skene and hunted the unfortunate he-goat.

"I need not tell you that Saint Mary's Loch, and the Loch of the Lowes, were among the most favourite scenes of our excursions, as his fondness for them continued to his last days, and we have both visited them many times together in his company. I may say the same of the Teviot, and the Aill, Borthwick-water, and the lonely towers of Buccleuch and Harden, Minto, Roxburgh, Gilnockie, &c. I think it was either in 1805 or 1806 that I first explored the Borthwick with him, when on our way to pass a week at Langholm with Lord and Lady Dalkeith, upon which occasion the otter-hunt, so well described in Guy Mannering, was got up by our noble host; and I can never forget the delight with which Scott observed the enthusiasm of the high-spirited yeomen, who had assembled in multitudes to partake the sport of their dear young chief, well mounted, and dashing about from rock to rock with a reckless ardour which recalled the alacrity of their forefathers in following the Buccleuchs of former days through adventures of a more serious order.

"Whatever the banks of the Tweed, from its source to its termination, presented of interest, we frequently visited; and I do verily believe there is not a single ford in the whole course of that river which we have not traversed together. He had an amazing fondness for fords, and was not a little adventurous in plunging through, whatever might be the state of the flood, and this even though there happened to be a bridge in view. If it seemed possible to scramble through, he scorned to go ten yards about, and in fact preferred the ford; and it is to be remarked, that most of the heroes of his tales seem to have been endued with similar propensities—even the White Lady of Avenel delights in the ford. He sometimes even attempted them on foot, though his lameness interfered considerably with his progress among the slippery stones. Upon one occasion of this sort I was assisting him through the Ettrick, and we had both got upon the same tottering stone in the middle of the stream, when some story about a kelpie occurring to him, he must needs stop and tell it with all his usual vivacity—and then, laughing heartily at his own joke, he slipped his foot, or the stone shuffled beneath him, and down he went headlong into the pool, pulling me after him. We escaped, however, with no worse than a thorough drenching and the loss of his stick, which floated down the river, and he was as ready as ever for a similar exploit before his clothes were half dried upon his back."

About this time Mr. and Mrs. Scott made a short excursion to the Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and visited some of their finest scenery, in company with Mr. Wordsworth. I have found no written narrative of this little tour, but I have often heard Scott speak with enthusiastic delight of the reception he met with in the humble cottage which his brother poet then inhabited on the banks of Grasmere; and at least one of the days they spent together was destined to furnish a theme for the verse of each, namely, that which they gave to the ascent of Helvellyn, where, in the course of the preceding spring, a young gentleman having lost his way and perished by falling over a precipice, his remains were discovered, three months afterwards, still watched by "a faithful terrier-bitch, his constant attendant during frequent rambles among the wilds."* This day they were accompanied by an illustrious philosopher, who was also a true poet—and might have been one of the greatest of poets had he chosen; and I have heard Mr. Wordsworth say, that it would be difficult to express the feelings with which he, who so often had climbed Helvellyn alone, found himself standing on its summit with two such men as Scott and Davy.

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* See notice prefixed to the song—

"I climbed the dark brow of the mighty Helvellyn," &c.,

in Scott's Poetical Works, edit. 1834, vol. i., 370; and compare the lines,

"Inmate of a mountain dwelling,
Thou hast clomb aloft, and gazed
From the watch-towers of Helvellyn,
Awed, delighted, and amazed," &c.

WORDSWORTH'S *Poetical Works*, 8vo. edit. vol. iii. p. 96.

After leaving Mr. Wordsworth, Scott carried his wife to spend a few days at Gilsland, among the scenes where they had first met; and his reception by the company at the wells was such as to make him look back with something of regret, as well as of satisfaction, to the change that had occurred in his circumstances since 1797. They were, however, enjoying themselves much there, when he received intelligence which induced him to believe that a French force was about to land in Scotland:—the alarm indeed had spread far and wide; and a mighty gathering of volunteers, horse and foot, from the Lothians and the Border country, took place in consequence at Dalkeith. He was not slow to obey the summons. He had luckily chosen to accompany on horseback the carriage in which Mrs. Scott travelled. His good steed carried him to the spot of rendezvous, full a hundred miles from Gilsland, within twenty-four hours; and on reaching it, though no doubt to his disappointment the alarm had already blown over, he was delighted with the general enthusiasm that had thus been put to the test—and, above all, by the rapidity with which the yeomen of Ettrick forest had poured down from their glens, under the guidance of his good friend and neighbour, Mr. Pringle of Torwoodlee. These fine fellows were quartered along with the Edinburgh troop when he reached Dalkeith and Musselburgh; and after some sham-battling, and a few evenings of high jollity had crowned the needless muster of the beacon-fires,* he immediately turned his horse again towards the south, and rejoined Mrs. Scott at Carlisle.

By the way, it was during his fiery ride from Gilsland to Dalkeith, on the occasion above mentioned, that he composed his Bard's Incantation, first published six years afterwards in the Edinburgh Annual Register:—

> "The forest of Glenmore is drear,
> It is all of black pine and the dark oak-tree," &c.—

and the verses bear the full stamp of the feelings of the moment.

Shortly after he was re-established at Ashestiel, he was visited there by Mr. Southey; this being, I believe, their first meeting. It is alluded to in the following letter; a letter highly characteristic in more respects than one.

To George Ellis, Esq., Sunninghill.

"Ashestiel, 17th October, 1805.

"Dear Ellis,

"More than a month has glided away in this busy solitude, and yet I have never sat down to answer your kind letter. I have only to plead a horror of pen and ink with which this country, in fine weather (and ours has been most beautiful) regularly affects me. In recompense I ride, walk, fish, course, eat and drink, with might and main from morning to night. I could have wished sincerely you had come to Reged this year to partake her rural amusements;—the only comfort I have is, that your visit would have been over, and now I look forward to it as a pleasure to come. I shall be infinitely obliged to you for your advice and assistance in the course of Dryden. I fear little can be procured for a Life beyond what Malone has compiled, but certainly his facts may be rather better told and arranged. I am at present busy with the dramatic department. This undertaking will make my being in London in spring a matter of absolute necessity.

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* See Note "Alarm of Invasion," Antiquary, vol. ii. p. 338.

"And now let me tell you of a discovery which I have made, or rather which Robert Jameson has made, in copying the MS. of 'True Thomas and the Queen of Elfland,' in the Lincoln cathedral. The queen, at parting, bestows the gifts of harping and carping upon the prophet, and mark his reply—

'To harp and carp, Thomas, where so ever ye gen—
Thomas, take thou these with thee.'—
'Harping,' he said, 'ken I nane,
For Tong is chefe of mynstrelsie.'

If poor Ritson could contradict his own system of materialism by rising from the grave to peep into this MS., he would slink back again in dudgeon and dismay. There certainly cannot be more respectable testimony than that of True Thomas, and you see he describes the tongue or recitation as the principal, or at least the most dignified, part of a minstrel's profession.

"Another curiosity was brought here a few days ago by Mr. Southey the poet, who favoured me with a visit on his way to Edinburgh. It was a MS. containing sundry metrical romances, and other poetical compositions in the northern dialect, apparently written about the middle of the 15th century. I had not time to make an analysis of its contents, but some of them seem highly valuable. There is a tale of Sir Gowther, said to be a Breton Lay, which partly resembles the history of Robert the Devil, the hero being begot in the same way; and partly that of Robert of Sicily, the penance imposed on Sir Gowther being the same, as he kept table with the hounds, and was discovered by a dumb lady to be the stranger knight who had assisted her father the emperor in his wars. There is also a MS. of Sir Isanbras; *item* a poem called Sir Amadas—not Amadis of Gaul, but a courteous knight who, being reduced to poverty, travels to conceal his distress, and gives the wreck of his fortune to purchase the rites of burial for a deceased knight, who had been refused them by the obduracy of his creditors. The rest of the story is the same with that of Jean de Calais, in the Bibliothèque Bleue, and with a vulgar ballad called the Factor's Garland. Moreover there is a merry tale of hunting a hare, as performed by a set of country clowns, with their mastiffs, and curs with 'short legs and never a tail.' The disgraces and blunders of these ignorant sportsmen must have afforded infinite mirth at the table of a feudal baron, prizing himself on his knowledge of the mysteries of the chase performed by these unauthorized intruders. There is also a burlesque sermon, which informs us of Peter and Adam journeying together to Babylon, and how Peter asked Adam *a full great doubtful question*, saying, 'Adam, Adam, why did'st thou eat the apple unpared?' This book belongs to a lady. I would have given something valuable to have had a week of it. Southey commissioned me to say that he intended to take extracts from it, and should be happy to copy, or cause to be copied, any part that you might wish to be possessed of; an offer which I heartily recommend to your early consideration. Where dwelleth Heber the magnificent, whose library and cellar* are so superior to all others in the world? I wish to write to him about Dryden. Any word lately from Jamaica? Yours truly, W. S."

Mr. Ellis, in his answer, says,—

"Heber will, I dare say, be of service to you in your present undertaking, if indeed you want any assistance, which I very much doubt; because it appears to me that the best edition which could now be given of Dryden, would be one which should unite accuracy of text and a handsome appearance, with good critical notes. *Quoad* Malone.—I should think Ritson himself, could he rise from the dead, would be puzzled to sift out a single additional anecdote of the poet's life; but to abridge

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* Ellis had mentioned, in a recent letter, Heber's buying wines to the value of £1100 at some sale he happened to attend this autumn.

Malone,—and to render his narrative terse, elegant, and intelligible,—would be a great obligation conferred on the purchasers (I will not say the readers, because I have doubts whether they exist in the plural number) of his very laborious compilation. The late Dr. Wharton, you may have heard, had a project of editing Dryden à la Hurd; that is to say, upon the same principle as the castrated edition of Cowley. His reason was that Dryden, having written for bread, became of necessity a most voluminous author, and poured forth more nonsense of indecency, particularly in his theatrical compositions, than almost any scribbler in that scribbling age. Hence, although his trancendent genius frequently breaks out, and marks the hand of the master, his comedies seem, by a tacit but general consent, to have been condemned to oblivion; and his tragedies, being printed in such bad company, have shared the same fate. But Dr. W. conceived that, by a judicious selection of these, together with his fables and prose works, it would be possible to exhibit him in a more advantageous light than by a republication of the whole mass of his writings. Whether the Doctor (who, by the way, was by no means scrupulously chaste and delicate, as you will be aware from his edition of Pope) had taken a just view of the subject, you know better than I; but I must own that the announcement of a *general* edition of Dryden gave me some little alarm. However, if you can suggest the sort of assistance you are desirous of receiving, I shall be happy to do what I can to promote your views. . . . . . . And so you are not disposed to *nibble* at the bait I throw out! Nothing but 'a decent edition of Hollinshed?' I confess that my project chiefly related to the later historical works respecting this country —to the union of Gall, Twisden, Camden, Leibnitz, &c. &c., leaving the Chronicles, properly so called, to shift for themselves. . . . . . . I am ignorant when you are to be in Edinburgh, and in that ignorance have not desired Blackburn, who is now at Glasgow, to call on you. He has the best practical understanding I have ever met with, and I vouch that you would be much pleased with his acquaintance. And so for the present God bless you. G. E."

Scott's letter in reply opens thus:—

"I will not castrate John Dryden. I would as soon castrate my own father, as I believe Jupiter did of yore. What would you say to any man who would castrate Shakspeare, or Massinger, or Beaumont and Fletcher? I don't say but that it may be very proper to select correct passages for the use of boarding-schools and colleges, being sensible no improper ideas can be suggested in these seminaries, unless they are intruded or smuggled under the beards and ruffs of our old dramatists. But in making an edition of a man of genius's works for libraries and collections, and such I conceive a complete edition of Dryden to be, I must give my author as I find him, and will not tear out the page, even to get rid of the blot, little as I like it. Are not the pages of Swift, and even of Pope, larded with indecency, and often of the most disgusting kind, and do we not see them upon all shelves and dressing-tables, and in all boudoirs? Is not Prior the most indecent of tale-tellers, not even excepting La Fontaine, and how often do we see his works in female hands? In fact, it is not passages of ludicrous indelicacy that corrupt the manners of a people—it is the sonnets which a prurient genius like Master Little sings *virginibus puerisque*—it is the sentimental slang, half lewd, half methodistic, that debauches the understanding, inflames the sleeping passions, and prepares the reader to give way as soon as a tempter appears. At the same time, I am not at all happy when I peruse some of Dryden's comedies: they are very stupid, as well as indelicate; sometimes, however, there is a considerable vein of liveliness and humour, and all of them present extraordinary pictures of the age in which he lived. My critical notes will not be very numerous, but I hope to illustrate the political poems, as Absalom and Achitophel, the Hind and Panther, &c. with some curious annotations. I have already made a complete search among some hundred pamphlets of that pamphlet-writing age, and with considerable success, as I have found several which throw light on my author. I am told that I am to be formidably opposed by Mr. Crowe, the Professor of Poetry at Oxford, who is also threatening an edition of Dryden. I don't know whether to be most vexed that some one had not undertaken the task sooner, or that Mr. Crowe is disposed to attempt it at the same time with me;—however, I now stand committed, and will not be *crowed* over, if I can help it. The third edition of the Lay is now in the press, of which I hope you will accept a copy, as it contains some trifling improvements or additions. They are, however, very trifling.

"I have written a long letter to Rees, recommending an edition of our historians, both Latin and English; but I have great hesitation whether to undertake much of it myself. What I can I certainly will do; but I should feel particularly delighted if you would join forces with me, when I think we might do the business to purpose. Do, Lord love you, think of this *grande opus*.

"I have not been so fortunate as to hear of Mr. Blackburn. I am afraid poor Daniel has been very idly employed—*Cœlum non animum*. I am glad you still retain the purpose of visiting Reged. If you live on mutton and game, we can feast you: for, as one wittily said, I am not the hare with many friends, but the friend with many hares.—W. S."

Mr. Ellis, in his next letter, says:—

"I will not disturb you by contesting any part of your ingenious apology for your intended *complete* edition of Dryden, whose genius I venerate as much as you do, and whose negligences, as he was not rich enough to doom them to oblivion in his own lifetime, it is perhaps incumbent on his editor to transmit to the latest posterity. Most certainly I am not so squeamish as to quarrel with him for his immodesty on any moral pretence. Licentiousness in writing, when accompanied by wit, as in the case of Prior, La Fontaine, &c., is never likely to excite any *passion*, because every passion is serious; and the grave epistle of Eloisa is more likely to do moral mischief and convey infection to love-sick damsels, than five hundred stories of Hans Carvel and Paulo Purgante; but whatever is in point of expression vulgar—whatever disgusts the taste—whatever might have been written by any fool, and is therefore unworthy of Dryden—whatever might have been suppressed, without exciting a moment's regret in the mind of any of his admirers—*ought*, in my opinion, to be suppressed by any editor who should be disposed to make an appeal to the public taste upon the subject; because a man who was perhaps the best poet and best prose writer in the language——but it is foolish to say so much, after promising to say nothing. Indeed I own *myself* guilty of possessing all his works in a very indifferent edition, and I shall certainly purchase a better one whenever you put it in my power. With regard to your competitors, I feel perfectly at my ease, because I am convinced that though you should generously furnish them with all the materials, they would not know how to use them: *non cuivis hominum contingit* to write critical notes that any one will read."

Alluding to the regret which Scott had expressed some time before at the shortness of his visit to the libraries of Oxford, Ellis says, in another of these letters—

"A library is like a butcher's shop: it contains plenty of meat, but it is all raw; no person living—(Leyden's breakfast was only a *tour de force* to astonish Ritson, and I expect the Abyssinians, whom I never saw)—can find a meal in it, till some good cook (suppose yourself) comes in and says, 'Sir, I see by your looks that you are hungry; I know your taste—be patient for a moment, and you shall be satisfied that you have an excellent appetite.'"

I shall not transcribe the mass of letters which Scott received from various other literary friends whose assistance he invoked in the preparation of his edition of Dryden; but among them there occurs one so admirable, that I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of introducing it, more especially as the views which it opens harmonize as remarkably with some, as they differ from others, of those which Scott himself ultimately expressed respecting the poetical character of his illustrious author.

"Patterdale, Nov. 7, 1805.

"My dear Scott,

"I was much pleased to hear of your engagement with Dryden: not that he is, as a poet, any great favourite of mine: I admire his talents and genius highly, but his is not a poetical genius. The only qualities I can find in Dryden that are *essentially* poetical, are a certain ardour and impetuosity of mind, with an excellent ear. It may seem strange that I do not add to this, great command of language: *that* he certainly has, and of such language, too, as it is most desirable that a poet should possess, or rather that he should not be without. But it is not language that is, in the highest sense of the word, poetical, being neither of the imagination nor of the passions; I mean the amiable, the ennobling, or the intense passions. I do not mean to say that there is nothing of this in Dryden, but as little, I think, as is possible, considering how much he has written. You will easily understand my meaning, when I refer to his versification of Palamon and Arcite, as contrasted with the language of Chaucer. Dryden had neither a tender heart nor a lofty sense of moral dignity. Whenever his language is poetically impassioned, it is mostly upon unpleasing subjects, such as the follies, vices, and crimes of classes of men or of individuals. That his cannot be the language of imagination, must have necessarily followed from this,—that there is not a single image from nature in the whole body of his works; and in his translation from Virgil, wherever Virgil can be fairly said to have had his *eye* upon his object, Dryden always spoils the passage.

"But too much of this; I am glad that you are to be his editor. His political and satirical pieces may be greatly benefited by illustration, and even absolutely require it. A correct text is the first object of an editor—then such notes as explain difficult or obscure passages; and lastly, which is much less important, notes pointing out authors to whom the poet has been indebted, not in the fiddling way of phrase here and phrase there—(which is detestable as a general practice) —but where he has had essential obligations either as to matter or manner.

"If I can be of any use to you, do not fail to apply to me. One thing I may take the liberty to suggest, which is, when you come to the fables, might it not be advisable to print the whole of the tales of Boccace in a smaller type in the original language? If this should look too much like swelling a book, I should certainly make such extracts as would show where Dryden has most strikingly improved upon, or fallen below, his original. I think his translations from Boccace are the best, at least the most poetical, of his poems. It is many years since I saw Boccace, but I remember that Sigismunda is not married by him to Guiscard—(the names are different in Boccace in both tales, I believe—certainly in Theodore, &c.) I think Dryden has much injured the story by the marriage, and degraded Sigismunda's character by it. He has also, to the best of my remembrance, degraded her still more by making her love absolute sensuality and appetite; Dryden had no other notion of the passion. With all these defects, and they are very gross ones, it is a noble poem. Guiscard's answer, when first reproached by Tancred, is noble in Boccace—nothing but this: *Amor può molto più che ne voi ne io possiamo.* This, Dryden has spoiled. He says first very well, 'the faults of love by love are justified,' and then come four lines of miserable rant, quite *à la Maximim.* Farewell, and believe me ever your affectionate friend,

William Wordsworth."

CHAPTER XV.

AFFAIR OF THE CLERKSHIP OF SESSION—LETTERS TO ELLIS AND LORD DALKEITH—VISIT TO LONDON—EARL SPENCER AND MR. FOX—CAROLINE, PRINCESS OF WALES—JOANNA BAILLIE—APPOINTMENT AS CLERK OF SESSION —LORD MELVILLE'S TRIAL—SONG ON HIS ACQUITTAL.—1806.

While the first volumes of his Dryden were passing through the press, the affair concerning the clerkship of the Court of Session, opened nine or ten months before, had not been neglected by the friends on whose counsel and assistance Scott had relied. In one of his Prefaces of 1830, he briefly tells the issue of this negotiation, which he justly describes as "an important circumstance in his life, of a nature to relieve him from the anxiety which he must otherwise have felt as one upon the precarious tenure of whose own life rested the principal prospects of his family, and especially as one who had necessarily some dependence on the proverbially capricious favour of the public." Whether Mr. Pitt's hint to Mr. William Dundas, that he would willingly find an opportunity to promote the interests of the author of the Lay, or some conversation between the Duke of Buccleuch and Lord Melville, first encouraged him to this direction of his views, I am not able to state distinctly; but I believe that the desire to see his fortunes placed on some more substantial basis, was at this time partaken pretty equally by the three persons who had the principal influence in the distribution of the crown patronage in Scotland; and as his object was rather to secure a future than an immediate increase of official income, it was comparatively easy to make such an arrangement as would satisfy his ambition. George Home of Wedderburn, in Berwickshire, a gentleman of considerable literary acquirements, and an old friend of Scott's family, had now served as Clerk of Session for upwards of thirty years. In those days there was no system of retiring pensions for the worn-out functionary of this class, and the usual method was, either that he should resign in favour of a successor who advanced a sum of money according to the circumstances of his age and health, or for a coadjutor to be associated with him in his patent, who undertook the duty on condition of a division of salary. Scott offered to relieve Mr. Home of all the labours of his office, and to allow him, nevertheless, to retain its emoluments entire during his lifetime; and the aged clerk of course joined his exertions to procure a conjoint-patent on these very advantageous terms. Mr. Home resigned, and a new patent was drawn out accordingly; but, by a clerical inadvertency, it was drawn out solely in Scott's favour, no mention of Mr. Home being inserted in the instrument. Although, therefore, the sign-manual had been affixed, and there remained nothing but to pay the fees and take out the commission, Scott, on discovering this omission, could not of course proceed in the business; since in the event of his dying before Mr. Home, that gentleman would have lost the vested interest which he had stipulated to retain. A pending charge of pecuniary corruption had compelled Lord Melville to retire from office some time before Mr. Pitt's death; and the cloud of popular obloquy under which he now laboured, rendered it impossible that Scott should expect assistance from the quarter to which, under any other circumstances, he would naturally have turned for extrication from this difficulty. He therefore, as soon as the Fox and Grenville Cabinet had been nominated, proceeded to London, to make in his own person such representations as might be necessary to secure the issuing of the patent in the shape originally intended.

It seems wonderful that he should ever have doubted for a single moment of the result; since, had the new Cabinet been purely Whig, and had he been the most notorious and violent of Tory partisans, neither of which was the case, the arrangement had been not only virtually, but, with the exception of an evident official blunder, formally completed; and no Secretary of State, as I must think, could have refused to rectify the paltry mistake in question without a dereliction of every principle of honour. The seals of the Home Office had been placed in the hands of a nobleman of the highest character—moreover, an ardent lover of literature;—while the chief of the new Ministry was one of the most generous as well as tasteful of mankind; and accordingly, when the circumstances were explained, there occurred no hesitation whatever on their parts.

> "I had," says Scott, "the honour of an interview with Earl Spencer, and he in the most handsome manner gave directions that the commission should issue as originally intended; adding that, the matter having received the royal assent, he regarded only as a claim of justice what he would willingly have done as an act of favour." He adds, "I never saw Mr. Fox on this or any other occasion, and never made any application to him, conceiving, that in doing so, I might have been supposed to express political opinions different from those which I had always professed. In his private capacity, there is no man to whom I would have been more proud to owe an obligation—had I been so distinguished." *

In January, 1806, however, Scott had by no means measured either the character, the feelings, or the arrangements of great public functionaries, by the standard with which observation and experience subsequently furnished him. He had breathed hitherto, as far as political questions of all sorts were concerned, the hot atmosphere of a very narrow scene,—and seems to have pictured to himself Whitehall and Downing Street as only a wider stage for the exhibition of the bitter and fanatical prejudices that tormented the petty circles of the Parliament House at Edinburgh; the true bearing and scope of which no man in after days more thoroughly understood, or more sincerely pitied. The variation of his feelings, while his business still remained undetermined, will, however, be best collected from the correspondence about to be quoted. It was, moreover, when these letters were written, that he was tasting for the first time, the full cup of fashionable blandishment as a *London Lion;* nor will the reader fail to observe how deeply, while he supposed his own most important worldly interests to be in peril on the one hand, and was surrounded with so many captivating flatteries on the other, he continued to sympathize with the misfortunes of his early friend and patron, now hurled from power, and subjected to a series of degrading persecutions, from the consequences of which that lofty spirit was never entirely to recover.

To George Ellis, Esq., Sunninghill.

"Edinburgh, January 25th, 1806.

"My dear Ellis,

"I have been too long in letting you hear of me, and my present letter is going to be a very selfish one, since it will be chiefly occupied by an affair of my own, in which, probably, you may find very little entertainment. I rely, however, upon your cordial good wishes and good advice, though, perhaps, you may be unable to afford me any direct assistance without more trouble than I would wish you to take on my account. You must know, then, that with a view of withdrawing entirely from the bar, I had entered into a transaction with an elderly and infirm gentleman, Mr. George Home, to be associated with him in the office which he holds as one of the principal clerks to our supreme Court of Session; I being to discharge the duty gratuitously during his life, and to succeed him at his decease. This could only be carried into effect by a new commission from the crown to him and me jointly, which has been issued in similar cases very lately, and is in point of form quite correct. By the interest of my kind and noble friend and chief, the Duke of Buccleuch, the countenance of Government was obtained to this arrangement, and the affair, as I have every reason to believe, is now in the Treasury. I have written to my solicitor, Alexander Mundell, Fludyer Street, to use every despatch in hurrying through the commission; but the news of to-day giving us every reason to apprehend Pitt's death, if that lamentable event has not already happened,* makes me get nervous on a subject so interesting to my little fortune. My political sentiments have been always constitutional and open, and although they were never rancorous, yet I cannot expect that the Scottish Opposition party, should circumstances bring them into power, would consider me as an object of favour: nor would I ask it at their hands. Their leaders cannot regard me with malevolence, for I am intimate with many of them; but they must provide for the Whiggish children before they throw their bread to the Tory dogs; and I shall not fawn on them because they have in their turn the superintendence of the larder. At the same time, if Fox's friends come into power, it must be with Windham's party, to whom my politics can be no exception,—if the politics of a private individual ought at any time to be made the excuse for intercepting the bounty of his sovereign, when it is in the very course of being bestowed.

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* Introduction to Marmion, 1830.

"The situation is most desirable, being £800 a-year, besides being consistent with holding my sheriffdom; and I could afford very well to wait till it opened to me by the death of my colleague, without wishing a most worthy and respectable man to die a moment sooner than ripe nature demanded. The duty consists in a few hours' labour in the forenoons when the Court sits, leaving the evenings and whole vacation open for literary pursuits. I will not relinquish the hope of such an establishment without an effort, if it is possible without dereliction of my principles to attain the accomplishment of it. As I have suffered in my professional line by addicting myself to the profane and unprofitable art of poem-making, I am very desirous to indemnify myself by availing myself of any prepossession which my literary reputation may, however unmeritedly, have created in my favour. I have found it useful when I applied for others, and I see no reason why I should not try if it can do any thing for myself.

"Perhaps, after all, my commission may be got out before a change of Ministry, if such an event shall take place, as it seems not far distant. If it is otherwise, will you be so good as to think and devise some mode in which my case may be stated to Windham or Lord Grenville, supposing them to come in? If it is not deemed worthy of attention, I am sure I shall be contented; but it is one thing to have a right to ask a favour, and another to hope that a transaction, already fully completed by the private parties, and approved of by an existing Administration, shall be permitted to take effect in favour of an unoffending individual. I believe I shall see you very shortly, unless I hear from Mundell that the business can be done for certain without my coming up. I will not, if I can help it, be flayed like a sheep for the benefit of some pettifogging lawyer or attorney. I have stated the matter to you very bluntly; indeed, I am not asking a favour, but, unless my self-partiality blinds me, merely fair play. Yours ever,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Walter Scott, Esq. Edinburgh.

"Bath, 6th February, 1806.

"My dear Scott,

"You must have seen by the lists of the new Ministry already published in all the papers, that, although the death of our excellent Minister has been certainly a most unfortunate event, in as far as it must tend to delay the object of your present wishes, there is no cause for your alarm on account of the change, excepting as far as that change is very extensive, and thus, perhaps much time may elapse before the business of every kind which was in arrears can be expedited by the new Administration. There is no change of principle (as far as we can yet judge) in the new Cabinet—or rather the new Cabinet has no general political creed. Lord Grenville, Fox, Lord Lansdowne, and Addington were the four nominal heads of four distinct parties, which must now by some chemical process be amalgamated; all must forget, if they can, their peculiar habits and opinions, and unite in the pursuit of a common object. How far this is possible, time will show; to what degree this motley Ministry can, by their joint influence, command a majority in the House of Commons; how far they will, *as a whole*, be assisted by the secret influence and power of the Crown; whether, if not so seconded, they will be able to appeal some time hence to the people, and dissolve the Parliament—all these and many other questions, will receive very different answers from different speculators. But in the mean time it is self-evident, that every individual will be extremely jealous of the patronage of his individual department; that individually as well as conjointly, they will be cautious of provoking enmity; and that a measure patronized by the Duke of Buccleuch is not very likely to be opposed by any member of such a Cabinet.

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* Mr. Pitt died January 23d, two days before this letter was written.

"If, indeed, the object of your wishes were a sinecure, and at the disposal of the Chancellor (Erskine), or of the President of the Board of Control (Lord Minto), you might have strong cause, perhaps, for apprehension; but what you ask would suit few candidates, and there probably is not one whom the Cabinet, or any person in it, would feel any strong *interest* in obliging to your disadvantage. But farther, we know that Lord Sidmouth is in the Cabinet, so is Lord Ellenborough, and these two are notoriously the *King's* Ministers. Now we may be very sure that they, or some other of the King's friends, will possess one department, which has no name, but is not the less real; namely, the supervision of the King's influence both here and in Scotland. I therefore much doubt whether there is any man in the Cabinet who, as Minister, has it in his power to prevent your attainment of your object. Lord Melville, we know, *was* in a great measure the representative of the King's personal influence in Scotland, and I am by no means sure that he is no longer so; but be that as it may, it will, I am well persuaded, continue in the hands of some one who has not been forced upon his Majesty as one of his confidential servants.

"Upon the whole, then, the only consolation that I can confidently give you is, that what you represent as a *principal* difficulty is *quite imaginary*, and that your own political principles are exactly those which are most likely to be serviceable to you. I need not say how happy Anne and myself would be to see you (we shall spend the month of March in London), nor that, if you should be able to point out any means by which I can be of the slightest use in advancing your interests, you may employ me without reserve. I must go to the Pump-room for my glass of water—so God bless you. Ever truly yours, G. ELLIS."

To George Ellis, Esq., Bath.

"London, Feb. 20, 1806.

"My dear Ellis,

"I have your kind letter, and am infinitely obliged to you for your solicitude in my behalf. I have indeed been rather fortunate, for the gale which has shattered so many goodly argosies, has blown my little bark into the creek for which she was bound, and left me only to lament the misfortunes of my friends. To vary the simile, while the huge frigates, the Moira and Lauderdale, were fiercely combating for the dominion of the Caledonian main, I was fortunate enough to get on board the good ship Spencer, and leave them to settle their disputes at leisure. It is said to be a violent ground of controversy in the new Ministry, which of those two noble lords is to be St. Andrew for Scotland. I own I tremble for the consequences of so violent a temper as Lauderdale's, irritated by long disappointed ambition and ancient feud with all his brother nobles. It is a certain truth that Lord Moira insists upon his claim, backed by all the friends of the late Administration in Scotland, to have a certain weight in that country; and it is equally certain that the Hamiltons and Lauderdales have struck out. So here are people who have stood in the rain without doors for so many years, quarrelling for the nearest place to the fire, as soon as they have set their feet on the floor. Lord Moira, as he always has been, was highly kind and courteous to me on this occasion.

"Heber is just come in, with your letter waving in his hand. I am ashamed of all the trouble I have given you, and at the same time flattered to find your friendship even equal to that greatest and most disagreeable of all trials, the task of solicitation. Mrs. Scott is *not* with me, and I am truly concerned to think we should be so near, without the prospect of meeting. Truth is, I had half a mind to make a run up to Bath, merely to break the spell which has prevented our meeting for these two years. But Bindley, the collector, has lent me a parcel of books, which he insists on my consulting within the liberties of Westminster, and which I cannot find elsewhere, so that the fortnight I propose to stay, will be fully occupied by examination and extracting. How long I may be detained here is very uncertain, but I wish to leave London on Saturday se'ennight. Should I be so delayed as to bring my time of departure any thing near that of your arrival, I will stretch my furlough to the utmost, that I may have a chance of seeing you. Nothing is minded here but domestic politics, and if we are not clean swept, there is no want of new brooms to perform that operation. I have heard very bad news of Leyden's health since my arrival here—such, indeed, as to give room to apprehend the very worst. I fear he has neglected the precautions which the climate renders necessary, and which no man departs from with impunity. Remember me kindly and respectfully to Mrs. Ellis; and believe me ever yours faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S. Poor Lord Melville! How does he look? We have had miserable accounts of his health in London. He was the architect of my little fortune, from circumstances of personal regard merely; for any of my trifling literary acquisitions were out of his way. My heart bleeds when I think on his situation—

'Even when the rage of battle ceased,
The victor's soul was not appeased.'"[*]

To the Earl of Dalkeith.

"London, 11th Feb. 1806.

"My dear Lord,

"I cannot help flattering myself—for perhaps it is flattering myself—that the noble architect of the Border Minstrel's little fortune has been sometimes anxious for the security of that lowly edifice, during the tempest which has overturned so many palaces and towers. If I am right in my supposition, it will give you pleasure to learn that, notwithstanding some little rubs, I have been able to carry through the transaction which your lordship sanctioned by your influence and approbation, and that in a way very pleasing to my own feelings. Lord Spencer, upon the nature of the transaction being explained in an audience with which he favoured me, was pleased to direct the commission to be issued, as an act of justice, regretting, he said, it had not been from the beginning his own deed. This was doing the thing handsomely, and like an English nobleman. I have been very much fêted and caressed here, almost indeed to suffocation, but have been made amends by meeting some old friends. One of the kindest was Lord Somerville, who volunteered introducing me to Lord Spencer, as much, I am convinced, from respect to your lordship's protection and wishes, as from a desire to serve me personally. He seemed very anxious to do any thing in his power which might evince a wish to be of use to your protegé. Lord Minto was also infinitely kind and active, and his influence with Lord Spencer would, I am convinced, have been stretched to the utmost in my favour, had not Lord Spencer's own view of the subject been perfectly sufficient.

"After all, a little literary reputation is of some use here. I suppose Solomon, when he compared a good name to a pot of ointment, meant that it oiled the hinges of the hall-doors into which the possessors of that inestimable treasure wished to penetrate. What a *good* name was in Jerusalem, a *known* name seems to be in London. If you are celebrated for writing verses or for slicing cucumbers, for being two feet taller or two feet less than any other biped, for acting plays when you should be whipped at school, or for attending schools and institutions when you should be preparing for your grave, your notoriety becomes a talisman—'an Open Sesame' before which every thing gives way—till you are voted a bore, and discarded for a new plaything. As this is a consummation of notoriety which I am by no means ambitious of experiencing, I hope I shall be very soon able to shape my course northward, to enjoy my good fortune at my leisure, and snap my fingers at the bar and all its works.

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[*] These lines are from Smollett's *Tears of Caledonia.*

"There is, it is believed, a rude scuffle betwixt our late commander-in-chief and Lord Lauderdale, for the patronage of Scotland. If there is to be an exclusive administration, I hope it will not be in the hands of the latter. Indeed, when one considers that, by means of Lords Sidmouth and Ellenborough, the King possesses the actual power of casting the balance between the five Grenvillites and four Foxites who compose the Cabinet, I cannot think they will find it an easy matter to force upon his majesty any one to whom he has a personal dislike. I should therefore suppose that the disposal of St. Andrew's Cross will be delayed till the new Ministry is a little consolidated, *if that time shall ever come.* There is much loose gunpowder amongst them, and one spark would make a fine explosion. Pardon these political effusions; I am infected by the atmosphere which I breathe, and cannot restrain my pen from discussing state affairs. I hope the young ladies and my dear little chief are now recovering from the whooping-cough, if it has so turned out to be. If I can do any thing for any of the family here, you know your right to command, and the pleasure it would afford me to obey. Will your lordship be so kind as to acquaint the Duke, with very grateful and respectful acknowledgment on my part, that I have this day got my commission from the Secretary's office? I dine to-day at Holland-house; I refused to go before, lest it should be thought I was soliciting interest in that quarter, as I abhor even the shadow of changing or turning with the tide.

"I am ever, with grateful acknowledgment, your lordship's much indebted, faithful humble servant, Walter Scott."

To George Ellis, Esq.

"London, Saturday, March 3, 1806.

"My dear Ellis,

"I have waited in vain for the happy dissolution of the spell which has kept us asunder at a distance less by one quarter than in general divides us; and since I am finally obliged to depart for the north to-morrow, I have only to comfort myself with the hope that Bladud will infuse a double influence into his tepid springs, and that you will feel emboldened, by the quantity of reinforcement which the radical heat shall have received, to undertake your expedition to the *tramontane* region of Reged this season. My time has been spent very gaily here, and I should have liked very well to have remained till you came up to town, had it not been for the wife and bairns at home, whom I confess I am now anxious to see. Accordingly, I set off early to-morrow morning—indeed I expected to have done so to-day, but my companion, Ballantyne, our Scottish Bodoni, was afflicted with a violent diarrhœa, which, though his physician assured him it would serve his health in general, would certainly have contributed little to his accomplishments as an agreeable companion in a post-chaise, which are otherwise very respectable. I own Lord Melville's misfortunes affect me deeply. He, at least his nephew, was my early patron, and gave me countenance and assistance when I had but few friends. I have seen when the streets of Edinburgh were thought by the inhabitants almost too vulgar for Lord Melville to walk upon; and now I fear that, with his power and influence gone, his presence would be accounted by many, from whom he has deserved other thoughts, an embarrassment, if not something worse. All this is very vile—it is one of the occasions when Providence, as it were, industriously turns the tapestry, to let us see the ragged ends of the worsted which compose its most beautiful figures. God grant your prophecies may be true, which I fear are rather dictated by your kind heart than your experience of political enmities and the fate of fallen statesmen. Kindest compliments to Mrs. Ellis. Your next will find me in Edinburgh.

Walter Scott."

To George Ellis, Esq.

"Ashestiel, April 7, 1806.

"My dear Ellis,

"Were I to begin by telling you all the regret I had at not finding you in London, and at being obliged to leave it before your return, this very handsome sheet of paper, which I intend to cover with more important and interesting matters, would be entirely occupied by such a Jeremiade as could only be equalled by Jeremiah himself. I will therefore waive that subject, only assuring you that I hope to be in London next spring, but have much warmer hopes of seeing you here in summer. I hope Bath has been of service; if not so much as you expected, try easy exercise in a northward direction, and make proof of the virtues of the Tweed and Yarrow. We have been here these two days, and I have been quite rejoiced to find all my dogs, and horses, and sheep, and cows, two cottages full of peasants and their children, and all my other stock, human and animal, in great good health —we want nothing but Mrs. Ellis and you to be the strangers within our gates, and our establishment would be complete on the patriarchal plan. I took possession of my new office on my return. The duty is very simple, consisting chiefly in signing my name; and as I have five colleagues, I am not obliged to do duty except in turn, so my task is a very easy one, as my name is very short.

"My principal companion in this solitude is John Dryden. After all, there are some passages in his translations from Ovid and Juvenal that will hardly bear reprinting, unless I would have the Bishop of London and the whole corps of Methodists about my ears. I wish you would look at the passages I mean. One is from the fourth book of Lucretius; the other from Ovid's Instructions to his Mistress. They are not only double-entendres, but good plain single-entendres—not only broad, but long, and as coarse as the mainsail of a first-rate. What to make of them I know not; but I fear that, without absolutely gelding the bard, it will be indispensable to circumcise him a little by leaving out some of the most obnoxious lines. Do pray look at the poems and decide for me. Have you seen my friend Tom Thomson, who is just now in London? He has, I believe, the advantage of knowing you, and I hope you will meet, as he understands more of old books, old laws, and old history than any man in Scotland. He has lately received an appointment in Scotland, which puts all our records under his immediate inspection and control, and I expect many valuable discoveries to be the consequence of his investigation, if he escapes being smothered in the cloud of dust which his researches will certainly raise about his ears. I sent your card instantly to Jeffrey from whom you had doubtless a suitable answer.* I saw the venerable economist and antiquary, Macpherson, when in London, and was quite delighted with the simplicity and kindness of his manners. He is exactly like one of the old Scotchmen whom I remember twenty years ago, before so close a union had taken place between Edinburgh and London. The mail-coach and the Berwick smacks have done more than the Union in altering our national character, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse.

"I met with your friend, Mr. Canning, in town, and claimed his acquaintance as a friend of yours, and had my claim allowed; also Mr. Frere,—both delightful companions, far too good for politics, and for winning and losing places. When I say I was more pleased with their society than I thought had been possible on so short an acquaintance, I pay them a very trifling compliment and myself a very great one. I had also the honour of dining with a fair friend of yours at Blackheath, an honour which I shall very long remember. She is an enchanting princess, who dwells in an enchanted palace, and I cannot help thinking that her prince must labour under some malignant spell when he denies himself her society. The very Prince of the Black Isles, whose bottom was marble, would have made an effort to transport himself to Montague House. From all this you will understand I was at Montague House.

"I am quite delighted at the interest you take in poor Lord Melville. I suppose they are determined to hunt him down. Indeed, the result of his trial must be ruin from the expense, even supposing him to be honourably acquitted. Will you, when you have time to write, let me know how that matter is likely to turn. I am deeply interested in it; and the reports here are so various, that one knows not what to trust to. Even the common rumour of London is generally more authentic than the 'from good authority' of Edinburgh. Besides, I am now in the wilds (alas! I cannot say *woods* and wilds), and hear little of what passes. Charlotte joins me in a thousand kind remembrances to Mrs. Ellis; and I am ever yours most truly,

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* Mr. Ellis had written to Mr. Jeffrey, through Scott, proposing to write an article for the Edinburgh Review on the Annals of Commerce, then recently published by Mr. David Macpherson.

WALTER SCOTT."

I shall not dwell at present upon Scott's method of conduct in the circumstances of an eminently popular author beleagured by the importunities of fashionable admirers: his bearing when first exposed to such influences was exactly what it was to the end, and I shall have occasion in the sequel to produce the evidence of more than one deliberate observer.

Caroline, Princess of Wales, was in those days considered among the Tories, whose politics her husband had uniformly opposed, as the victim of unmerited misfortune, cast aside from the mere wantonness of caprice, by a gay and dissolute voluptuary; while the Prince's Whig associates had espoused his quarrel, and were already, as the event showed, prepared to act, publicly as well as privately, as if they believed her to be among the most abandoned of her sex. I know not by whom Scott was first introduced to her little Court at Blackheath; but I think it was probably through Mrs. Hayman, a lady of her bedchamber, several of whose notes and letters occur about this time in the collection of his correspondence. The careless levity of the Princess's manner was observed by him, as I have heard him say, with much regret, as likely to bring the purity of heart and mind, for which he gave her credit, into suspicion. For example, when, in the course of the evening, she conducted him by himself to admire some flowers in a conservatory, and the place being rather dark, his lameness occasioned him to hesitate for a moment in following her down some steps, which she had taken at a skip, she turned round, and said, with mock indignation, "Ah, false and faint-hearted troubadour! you will not trust yourself with me for fear of your neck!"

I find from one of Mrs. Hayman's letters, that on being asked, at Montague House, to recite some verses of his own, he replied that he had none unpublished which he thought worthy of her Royal Highness's attention, but introduced a short account of the Ettrick Shepherd, and repeated one of the ballads of the *Mountain Bard*, for which he was then endeavouring to procure subscribers. The Princess appears to have been interested by the story, and she affected, at all events, to be pleased with the lines; she desired that her name might be placed on the Shepherd's list, and thus he had at least one gleam of royal patronage.

It was during the same visit to London that Scott first saw Joanna Baillie, of whose Plays on the Passions he had been, from their first appearance, an enthusiastic admirer. The late Mr. Sotheby, the translator of Oberon, &c. &c. was the mutual friend who introduced him to the poetess of Hampstead. Being asked very lately what impression he made upon her at this interview—"I was at first," she answered, "a little disappointed, for I was fresh from the Lay, and had pictured to myself an ideal elegance and refinement of feature; but I said to myself, If I had been in a crowd, and at a loss what to do, I should have fixed upon that face among a thousand, as the sure index of the benevolence and shrewdness that would and could help me in my strait. We had not talked long, however, before I saw in the expressive play of his countenance far more even of elegance and refinement than I had missed in its mere lines." The acquaintance thus begun, soon ripened into a most affectionate intimacy between him and this remarkable woman; and thenceforth she and her distinguished brother, Dr. Matthew Baillie, were among the friends to whose intercourse he looked forward with the greatest pleasure when about to visit the metropolis.

I ought to have mentioned before, that he had known Mr. Sotheby at a very early period of life, that amiable and excellent man having been stationed for some time at Edinburgh while serving his Majesty as a captain of dragoons. Scott ever retained for him a sincere regard; he was always, when in London, a frequent guest at his hospitable board; and owed to him the personal acquaintance of not a few of their most eminent contemporaries in various departments of literature and art.

When the Court opened after the spring recess, Scott entered upon his new duties as one of the Principal Clerks of Sessions; and as he continued to discharge them with exemplary regularity, and to the entire satisfaction both of the Judges and the Bar, during the long period of twenty-five years, I think it proper to tell precisely in what they consisted, the more so because, in his letter to Ellis of the 25th January, he has himself (characteristically enough) understated them.

The Court of Session sits at Edinburgh from the 12th of May to the 12th of July, and again from the 12th November, with a short interval at Christmas, to the 12th of March. The Judges of the Inner Court took their places on the Bench, in his time, every morning not later than ten o'clock, and remained according to the amount of business ready for despatch, but seldom for less than four or more than six hours daily; during which space the Principal Clerks continued seated at a table below the Bench to watch the progress of the suits, and record the decisions—the cases, of all classes, being equally apportioned among their number. The Court of Session, however, does not sit on Monday, that day being reserved for the criminal business of the High Court of Justiciary; and there is also another blank day every other week,—the *Teind Wednesday*, as it is called, when the Judges are assembled for the hearing of tithe questions, which belong to a separate jurisdiction, of comparatively modern creation, and having its own separate establishment of officers. On the whole, then, Scott's attendance in Court may be taken to have amounted, on the average, to from four to six hours daily during rather less than six months out of the twelve.

Not a little of the Clerk's business in Court is merely formal, and indeed mechanical; but there are few days in which he is not called upon for the exertion of his higher faculties, in reducing the decisions of the Bench, orally pronounced, to technical shape; which, in a new, complex, or difficult case, cannot be satisfactorily done, without close attention to all the previous proceedings and written documents, an accurate understanding of the principles or precedents on which it has been determined, and a thorough command of the whole vocabulary of legal forms. Dull or indolent men, promoted through the mere wantonness of political patronage, might, no doubt, contrive to devolve the harder part of their duty upon humbler assistants; but, in general, the office had been held by gentlemen of high character and attainments; and more than one among Scott's own colleagues enjoyed the reputation of legal science that would have done honour to the Bench. Such men, of course, prided themselves on doing well whatever it was their proper function to do; and it was by their example, not that of the drones who condescended to lean upon unseen and irresponsible inferiors, that Scott uniformly modelled his own conduct as a Clerk of Sessions. To do this required, of necessity, constant study of law-papers and authorities at home. There was also a great deal of really base drudgery, such as the authenticating of registered deeds, by signature, which he had to go through out of Court; he had, too, a Shrievalty, though not a heavy one, all the while upon his hands;—and, on the whole, it forms one of the most remarkable features in his history, that, throughout the most active period of his literary career, he must have devoted a large proportion of his hours, during half at least of every year, to the conscientious discharge of professional duties.

Henceforth, then, when in Edinburgh, his literary work was performed chiefly before breakfast—with the assistance of such evening hours as he could contrive to rescue from the consideration of Court papers, and from those social engagements in which, year after year, as his celebrity advanced, he was of necessity more and more largely involved; and of those entire days during which the Court of Session did not sit—days which, by most of those holding the same official station, were given to relaxation and amusement. So long as he continued quartermaster of the Volunteer Cavalry, of course he had, even while in Edinburgh, some occasional horse exercise; but, in general, his town life henceforth was, in that respect, as inactive as his country life ever was the reverse. He scorned for a long while to attach any consequence to this complete alternation of habits; but we shall find him confessing in the sequel, that it proved highly injurious to his bodily health.

I may here observe that the duties of his clerkship brought him into close daily connexion with a set of gentlemen, most of whom were soon regarded by him with a most cordial affection and confidence. Among his fellow-clerks were David Hume (the nephew of the historian) whose lectures on the Law of Scotland are characterized with just eulogy in the Ashestiel Memoir, and who subsequently became a Baron of the Exchequer; a man as virtuous and amiable as conspicuous for masculine vigour of intellect and variety of knowledge. Another was Hector Macdonald Buchanan of Drummakiln, a frank-hearted and generous gentleman, not the less acceptable to Scott for the Highland prejudices which he inherited with the high blood of Clanranald; at whose beautiful seat of Ross Priory, on the shores of Lochlomond, he was henceforth almost annually a visitor—a circumstance which has left many traces in the Waverley Novels. A third (though I believe of later appointment), with whom his intimacy was not less strict, was the late excellent Sir Robert Dundas, of Beechwood, Bart.; and a fourth, was the friend of his boyhood, one of the dearest he ever had, Colin Mackenzie of Portmore. With these gentlemen's families, he and his lived in such constant familiarity of kindness, that the children all called their fathers' colleagues *uncles*, and the mothers of their little friends, *aunts;* and in truth, the establishment was a brotherhood.

Scott's nomination as Clerk of Session, appeared in the same Gazette (March 8, 1806), which announced the instalment of the Hon. Henry Erskine and John Clerk of Eldin as Lord Advocate and Solicitor-General for Scotland. The promotion at such a moment, of a distinguished Tory, might well excite the wonder of the Parliament House; and even when the circumstances were explained, the inferior local adherents of the triumphant cause were far from considering the conduct of their superiors in this matter with feelings of satisfaction. The indication of such humours was deeply resented by his haughty spirit; and he in his turn showed his irritation in a manner well calculated to extend to higher quarters the spleen with which his advancement had been regarded by persons wholly unworthy of his attention. In short, it was almost immediately after a Whig Ministry had gazetted his appointment to an office which had for twelve months formed a principal object of his ambition, that, rebelling against the implied suspicion of his having accepted something like a personal obligation at the hands of adverse politicians, he for the first time put himself forward as a decided Tory partisan.

The impeachment of Lord Melville was among the first measures of the new Government; and personal affection and gratitude graced as well as heightened the zeal with which Scott watched the issue of this, in his eyes, vindictive proceeding; but, though the ex-minister's ultimate acquittal was, as to all the charges involving his personal honour, complete, it must now be allowed that the investigation brought out many circumstances by no means creditable to his discretion; and the rejoicings of his friends ought not, therefore, to have been scornfully jubilant. Such they were, however—at least in Edinburgh; and Scott took his share in them by inditing a song, which was sung by James Ballantyne, and received with clamorous applauses, at a public dinner given in honour of the event on the 27th of June, 1806. I regret that this piece was inadvertently omitted in the late collective edition of his poetical works; but since such is the case, I consider myself bound to insert it here. However he may have regretted it afterwards, he authorized its publication in the newspapers of the time, and my narrative would fail to convey a complete view of the man, if I should draw a veil over the expression, thus deliberate, of some of the strongest personal feelings that ever animated his verse.

"HEALTH TO LORD MELVILLE.

AIR—*Carrickfergus.*

"Since here we are set in array round the table,
  Five hundred good fellows well met in a hall,
Come listen, brave boys, and I'll sing as I'm able
  How innocence triumphed and pride got a fall.

But push round the Claret—
Come, stewards, don't spare it—
With rapture you'll drink to the toast that I give:
Here, boys,
Off with it merrily
Melville for ever, and long may he live!

"What were the Whigs doing when, boldly pursuing,
Pitt banished Rebellion, gave Treason a string?
Why, they swore, on their honour, for Arthur O'Connor,
And fought hard for Despard against country and king.
Well, then, we knew, boys,
Pitt and Melville were true boys,
And the tempest was raised by the friends of Reform.
Ah, woe!
Weep to his memory;
Low lies the pilot that weathered the storm!

"And pray, don't you mind when the Blues first were raising,
And we scarcely could think the house safe o'er our heads?
When villains and coxcombs, French politics praising,
Drove peace from our tables and sleep from our beds?
Our hearts they grew bolder
When, musket on shoulder,
Stepp'd forth our old Statesman example to give.
Come, boys, never fear,
Drink the Blue grenadier—
Here's to old Harry, and long may he live!

"They would turn us adrift; though rely, sir, upon it—
Our own faithful chronicles warrant us that
The free mountaineer and his bonny blue bonnet
Have oft gone as far as the regular's hat.
We laugh at their taunting,
For all we are wanting
Is license our life for our country to give.
Off with it merrily,
Horse, foot, and artillery,—
Each loyal Volunteer, long may he live.

"'Tis not us alone, boys—the Army and Navy
Have each got a slap 'mid their politic pranks;
Cornwallis cashier'd, that watched winters to save ye,
And the Cape called a bauble, unworthy of thanks.
But vain is their taunt,
No soldier shall want
The thanks that his country to valour can give:
Come, boys,
Drink it off merrily,—
Sir David and Popham, and long may they live!

"And then our revenue—Lord knows how they viewed it
While each petty Statesman talked lofty and big;
But the beer-tax was weak, as if Whitbread had brewed it,
And the pig-iron duty a shame to a pig.
In vain is their vaunting,
Too surely there's wanting
What judgment, experience, and steadiness give;
Come, boys,
Drink about merrily,—
Health to sage Melville, and long may he live!

"Our King, too—our Princess—I dare not say more, sir,—
May Providence watch them with mercy and might!
While there's one Scottish hand that can wag a claymore, sir,
They shall ne'er want a friend to stand up for their right.

Be damn'd he that dare not,—
For my part, I'll spare not
To beauty afflicted a tribute to give:
Fill it up steadily,
Drink it off readily,—
Here's to the Princess, and long may she live.

"And since we must not set Auld Reikie in glory,
And make her brown visage as light as her heart;*
Till each man illumine his own upper story,
Nor law-book nor lawyer shall force us to part.
In Grenville and Spencer,
And some few good men, sir,
High talents we honour, slight difference forgive:
But the Brewer we'll hoax,
Tallyho to the Fox,
And drink Melville for ever, as long as we live!"

This song gave great offence to the many sincere personal friends whom Scott numbered among the upper ranks of the Whigs; and, in particular, it created a marked coldness towards him on the part of the accomplished and amiable Countess of Rosslyn (a very intimate friend of his favourite patroness, Lady Dalkeith), which, as his letters show, wounded his feelings severely,—the more so, I have no doubt, because a little reflection must have made him repent not a few of its allusions. He was consoled, however, by abundant testimonies of Tory approbation; and, among others, by the following note from Mr. Canning:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.

"London, July 14, 1806.

"Dear Sir,

"I should not think it necessary to trouble you with a direct acknowledgment of the very acceptable present which you were so good as to send me through Mr. William Rose, if I had not happened to hear that some of those persons who could not indeed be expected to be pleased with your composition, have thought proper to be very loud and petulant in the expression of their disapprobation. Those, therefore, who approve, and are thankful for your exertions in a cause which they have much at heart, owe it to themselves, as well as to you, that the expressions of their gratitude and pleasure should reach you in as direct a manner as possible. I hope that, in the course of next year, you are likely to afford your friends in this part of the world an opportunity of repeating these expressions to you in person; and I have the honour to be, dear sir, with great truth, your very sincere and obedient servant,

George Canning."

Scott's Tory feelings appear to have been kept in a very excited state during the whole of this short reign of the Whigs. He then, for the first time, mingled keenly in the details of county politics,—canvassed electors—harangued meetings; and, in a word, made himself conspicuous as a leading instrument of his party—more especially as an indefatigable local manager, wherever the parliamentary interest of the Buccleuch family was in peril. But he was, in truth, earnest and serious in his belief that the new rulers of the country were disposed to abolish many of its most valuable institutions; and he regarded with special jealousy certain schemes of innovation with respect to the courts of law and the administration of justice, which were set on foot by the crown officers of Scotland. At a debate of the Faculty of Advocates on some of these propositions, he made a speech much longer than any he had ever before delivered in that assembly; and several who heard it have assured me, that it had a flow of energy and eloquence for which those who knew him best had been quite unprepared. When the meeting broke up, he walked across *the Mound*, on his way to Castle Street, between Mr. Jeffrey and another of his reforming friends, who complimented him on the rhetorical powers he had been displaying, and would willingly have treated the subject-matter of the discussion playfully. But his feelings had been moved to an extent far beyond their apprehension: he exclaimed, "No, no—'tis no laughing matter; little by little, whatever your wishes may be, you will destroy and undermine, until nothing of what makes Scotland Scotland shall remain." And so saying, he turned round to conceal his agitation—but not until Mr. Jeffrey saw tears gushing down his cheek—resting his head until he recovered himself on the wall of the mound. Seldom, if ever, in his more advanced age, did any feelings obtain such mastery.

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* The Magistrates of Edinburgh had rejected an application for illumination of the town, on the arrival of the news of Lord Melville's acquittal.

CHAPTER XVI.

DRYDEN—CRITICAL PIECES—EDITION OF SLINGSBY'S MEMOIRS, &c.—MARMION BEGUN—VISIT TO LONDON—ELLIS—ROSE—CANNING—MISS SEWARD—SCOTT SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION ON SCOTCH JURISPRUDENCE—LETTERS TO SOUTHEY, &c.—PUBLICATION OF MARMION—ANECDOTES—THE EDINBURGH REVIEW ON MARMION.—1806-1808.

During the whole of 1806 and 1807, Dryden continued to occupy the greater share of Scott's literary hours; but in the course of the former year he found time and, notwithstanding all these political bickerings, inclination, to draw up three papers for the Edinburgh Review; viz. one on the poems and translations of the Hon. William Hebert; a second, more valuable and elaborate, in which he compared the "*Specimens* of Early English Romances" by Ellis, with the "*Selection* of Ancient English Metrical Romances" by Ritson; and, lastly, that exquisite piece of humour, his article on the Miseries of Human Life, to which Mr. Jeffrey added some, if not all, of the *Reviewers' Groans* with which it concludes. It was in September 1806, too, that Messrs. Longman put forth, in a separate volume, those of his own ballads which, having been included in the Minstrelsy, were already their property, together with a collection of his "Lyrical Pieces;" for which he received £100. This publication, obviously suggested by the continued popularity of the Lay, was highly successful, seven thousand copies having been disposed of before the first collective edition of his poetical works appeared. He had also proposed to include the House of Aspen in the same volume, but on reflection once more laid his prose tragedy aside. About the same time he issued, though without his name, a miscellaneous volume, entitled, "Original Memoirs written during the Great Civil Wars; being the Life of Sir Henry Slingsby, and Memoirs of Captain Hodgson, with Notes," &c. Scott's preface consists of a brief but elegant and interesting biography of the gallant cavalier Slingsby; his notes are few and unimportant. This volume (by which he gained nothing as editor) was put forth in October by Messrs. Constable; and in November, 1806, he began *Marmion*, the publication of which was the first important business of his in which that enterprising firm had a primary part.

He was at this time in frequent communication with several leading booksellers, each of whom would willingly have engrossed his labours; but from the moment that his literary undertakings began to be serious, he seems to have resolved against forming so strict a connexion with any one publisher, as might at all interfere with the freedom of his transactions. I think it not improbable that his interests as the partner of Ballantyne may have had some influence in this part of his conduct; at all events, there can be little doubt that the hope of sharing more and more in the profits of Scott's original works induced the competing booksellers to continue and extend their patronage of the Edinburgh printer, who had been introduced to their notice as the personal friend of the most rising author of the day. But nevertheless, I can have no doubt that Scott was mainly guided by his love of independence. It was always his maxim, that no author should ever let any one house fancy that they had obtained a right of monopoly over his works—or, as he expressed it in the language of the Scotch feudalists, "that they had completely thirled him to their mill;" and through life, as we shall see, the instant he perceived the least trace of this feeling, he asserted his freedom, not by word, but by some decided deed, on whatever considerations of pecuniary convenience the step might make it necessary for him to trample. Of the conduct of Messrs. Longman, who had been principally concerned in the Minstrelsy, the Lay, Sir Tristrem, and the Ballads, he certainly could have had no reason to complain; on the contrary, he has in various places attested that it was liberal and handsome beyond his expectation; but nevertheless, a negotiation which they now opened proved fruitless, and ultimately they had no share whatever in the second of his original works.

Constable offered a thousand guineas for the poem very shortly after it was begun, and without having seen one line of it; and Scott, without hesitation, accepted this proposal. It may be gathered from the Introduction of 1830, that private circumstances of a delicate nature rendered it highly desirable for him to obtain the immediate command of such a sum; the price was actually paid long before the poem was published; and it suits very well with Constable's character to suppose that his readiness to advance the money may have outstripped the calculations of more established dealers, and thus cast the balance in his favour. He was not, however, so unwise as to keep the whole adventure to himself. His bargain being fairly concluded, he tendered one-fourth of the copyright to Mr. Miller of Albemarle Street, and another to Mr. Murray, then of Fleet Street, London; and both these booksellers appear to have embraced his proposition with eagerness. "I am," Murray wrote to Constable, on the 6th February, 1807, "truly sensible of the kind remembrance of me in your liberal purchase. You have rendered Mr. Miller no less happy by your admission of him; and we both view it as honourable, profitable, and glorious to be concerned in the publication of a new poem by Walter Scott." The news that a thousand guineas had been paid for an unseen and unfinished MS. appeared in those days portentous; and it must be allowed that the writer who received such a sum for a performance in embryo, had made a great step in the hazards, as well as in the honours, of authorship.

The private circumstances which he alludes to as having precipitated his re-appearance as a poet were connected with his brother Thomas's final withdrawal from the profession of a Writer to the Signet, which arrangement seems to have become quite necessary towards the end of 1806; but it is extremely improbable that, in the absence of any such occurrence, a young, energetic, and ambitious man would have long resisted the cheering stimulus of such success as had attended the Lay of the Last Minstrel.

> "I had formed," he says, "the prudent resolution to bestow a little more labour than I had yet done on my productions, and to be in no hurry again to announce myself as a candidate for literary fame. Accordingly, particular passages of a poem which was finally called 'Marmion' were laboured with a good deal of care by one by whom much care was seldom bestowed. Whether the work was worth the labour or not, I am no competent judge: but I may be permitted to say, that the period of its composition was a very happy one in my life; so much so, that I remember with pleasure at this moment (1830) some of the spots in which particular passages were composed. It is probably owing to this that the introductions to the several cantos assumed the form of familiar epistles to my intimate friends, in which I alluded, perhaps more than was necessary or graceful, to my domestic occupations and amusements—a loquacity which may be excused by those who remember that I was still young, light-headed, and happy, and that *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*"*

The first four of the Introductory Epistles are dated Ashestiel, and they point out very distinctly some of the "spots" which, after the lapse of so many years, he remembered with pleasure, for their connexion with particular passages of Marmion. There is a knoll with some tall old ashes on the adjoining farm of the Peel, where he was very fond of sitting by himself, and it still bears the name of the *Sheriff's knowe.* Another favourite seat was beneath a huge oak hard by the Tweed, at the extremity of the *haugh* of Ashestiel. It was here, that while meditating his verses, he used

> "to stray,
> And waste the solitary day
> In plucking from yon fen the reed,
> And watch it floating down the Tweed;
> Or idly list the shrilling lay
> With which the milkmaid cheers her way,
> Marking its cadence rise and fail,
> As from the field, beneath her pail,
> She trips it down the uneven dale."

He frequently wandered far from home, however, attended only by his dog, and would return late in the evening, having let hours after hours slip away among the soft and melancholy wildernesses where Yarrow creeps from her fountains. The lines,

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* Introduction to Marmion, 1830.

> "Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,
> By lone Saint Mary's silent lake," &c.

paint a scene not less impressive than what Byron found amidst the gigantic pines of the forest of Ravenna; and how completely does he set himself before us in the moment of his gentler and more solemn inspiration, by the closing couplet,

> "Your horse's hooftread sounds too rude,
> So stilly is the solitude."

But when the theme was of a more stirring order, he enjoyed pursuing it over brake and fell at the full speed of his *Lieutenant.* I well remember his saying, as I rode with him across the hills from Ashestiel to Newark one day in his declining years—"Oh, man, I had many a grand gallop among these braes when I was thinking of Marmion, but a trotting canny pony must serve me now." His friend, Mr. Skene, however, informs me that many of the more energetic descriptions, and particularly that of the battle of Flodden, were struck out while he was in quarters again with his cavalry, in the autumn of 1807. "In the intervals of drilling," he says, "Scott used to delight in walking his powerful black steed up and down by himself upon the Portobello sands, within the beating of the surge; and now and then you would see him plunge in his spurs and go off as if at the charge, with the spray dashing about him. As we rode back to Musselburgh, he often came and placed himself beside me to repeat the verses that he had been composing during these pauses of our exercise."

He seems to have communicated fragments of the poem very freely during the whole of its progress. As early as the 22d February, 1807, I find Mrs. Hayman acknowledging, in the name of the Princess of Wales, the receipt of a copy of the Introduction to Canto III., in which occurs the tribute to Her Royal Highness's heroic father, mortally wounded the year before at Jena—a tribute so grateful to her feelings that she herself shortly after sent the poet an elegant silver vase as a memorial of her thankfulness. And about the same time the Marchioness of Abercorn expresses the delight with which both she and her lord had read the generous verses on Pitt and Fox, in another of those epistles. But his connexion with this noble family was no new one; for his father, and afterwards his brother Thomas, had been the auditors of their Scotch rental.

In March, his researches concerning Dryden carried him again to the south. During several weeks he gave his day pretty regularly to the pamphlets and MSS. of the British Museum, and the evening to the brilliant societies that now courted him whenever he came within their sphere. His recent political demonstrations during the brief reign of the Whigs, seem to have procured for him on this occasion a welcome of redoubled warmth among the leaders of his own now once more victorious party. "As I had," he writes to his brother-in-law, in India, "contrary to many who avowed the same opinions in sunshine, held fast my integrity during the Foxite's interval of power, I found myself of course very well with the new administration." But he uniformly reserved his Saturday and Sunday either for Mr. Ellis, at Sunninghill, or Lord and Lady Abercorn, at their beautiful villa near Stanmore; and the press copy of Cantos I. and II. of Marmion attests that most of it reached Ballantyne in sheets, franked by the Marquis, or his son-in-law, Lord Aberdeen, during April, 1807.

Before he turned homeward he made a short visit to his friend William Stewart Rose, at his cottage of Gundimore, in Hampshire, and enjoyed in his company various long rides in the New Forest, a day in the dock-yard of Portsmouth, and two or three more in the Isle of Wight.* Several sheets of the MS., and corrected proofs of Canto III. are also under covers franked from Gundimore by Mr. Rose; and I think I must quote the note which accompanied one of these detachments, as showing the good-natured buoyancy of mind and temper with which the Poet received in every stage of his progress the hints and suggestions of his watchful friends, Erskine and Ballantyne. The latter having animadverted on the first draught of the song "Where shall the Lover rest," and sketched what he thought would be a better arrangement of the stanza—Scott answers as follows:—

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* I am sure I shall gratify every reader by extracting some lines, alluding to Scott's visit at Mr. Rose's Marine Villa, from an unpublished poem, entitled "Gundimore," kindly placed at my disposal by his host.

"Here Walter Scott has woo'd the northern muse;
Here he with me has joy'd to walk or cruise;
And hence has pricked through Yten's holt, where we
Have called to mind how under greenwood tree,
Pierced by the partner of his 'woodland craft,'
King Rufus fell by Tyrrell's random shaft.
Hence have we ranged by Celtic camps and barrows,
Or climbed the expectant bark, to thread the Narrows
Of Hurst, bound westward to the gloomy bower
Where Charles was prisoned in yon Island tower;
Or from a longer flight alighted where
Our navies to recruit their strength repair—
And there have seen the ready shot and gun;
Seen in red stream the molten copper run;
And massive anchor forged, whose iron teeth
Should hold the three-decked ship when billows seethe;
And when the arsenal's dark stithy rang
With the loud hammers of the Cyclop-gang,
Swallowing the darkness up, have seen with wonder,
The flashing fire, and heard fast-following thunder.
Here, witched from summer sea and softer reign,
Foscolo courted Muse of milder strain.
On these ribbed sands was Coleridge pleased to pace,
While ebbing seas have hummed a rolling base
To his rapt talk. Alas! all these are gone,
'And I and other creeping things live on.'
The flask no more, dear Walter, shall I quaff
With thee, no more enjoy thy hearty laugh.
No more shalt thou to me extend thy hand,
A welcome pilgrim to my father's land!

* * * *

Alone such friends and comrades I deplore,
And peopled but with phantoms is the shore:
Hence have I fled my haunted beach; yet so
Would not alike a sylvan home forego.
Though wakening fond regrets its sere and yellow
Leaves, and sweet inland murmur, serve to mellow
And soothe the sobered sorrow they recall,
When mantled in the faded garb of fall;—
But wind and wave—unlike the sighing sedge
And murmuring leaf—gave grief a coarser edge:
And in each howling blast my fancy hears
'The voices of the dead, and songs of other years.'"

"Dear James,

"I am much obliged to you for the rhymes. I presume it can make no difference as to the air if the first three lines rhyme; and I wish to know, with your leisure, if it is absolutely necessary that the fourth should be out of poetic rhythm, as 'the deserted fair one' certainly is.—For example would this do?

'Should my heart from thee falter,
To another love alter,
(For the rhyme we'll say Walter)
Deserting my lover.'

There is here the same number of syllables, but arranged in cadence. I return the proof and send more copy. There will be six Cantos. Yours truly,

W. S."

In the first week of May we find him at Lichfield, having diverged from the great road to Scotland for the purpose of visiting Miss Seward. Her account of her old correspondent, whom till now she had never seen, was addressed to Mr. Cary, the translator of Dante; and it may interest the reader to compare it with other similar sketches of earlier and later date.

"On Friday last," she says, "the poetically great Walter Scott came 'like a sunbeam to my dwelling.' This proudest boast of the Caledonian muse is tall, and rather robust than slender, but lame in the same manner as Mr. Hayley, and in a greater measure. Neither the contour of his face nor yet his features are elegant; his complexion healthy, and somewhat fair, without bloom. We find the singularity of brown hair and eyelashes, with flaxen eyebrows, and a countenance open, ingenuous, and benevolent. When seriously conversing or earnestly attentive, though his eyes are rather of a lightish grey, deep thought is on their lids: he contracts his brow, and the rays of genius gleam aslant from the orbs beneath them. An upper lip too long prevents his mouth from being decidedly handsome, but the sweetest emanations of temper and heart play about it when he talks cheerfully or smiles; and in company he is much oftener gay than contemplative. His conversation—an overflowing fountain of brilliant wit, apposite allusion, and playful archness—while on serious themes it is nervous and eloquent; the accent decidedly Scotch, yet by no means broad. On the whole, no expectation is disappointed which his poetry must excite in all who feel the power and graces of human inspiration. . . . . Not less astonishing than was Johnson's memory is that of Mr. Scott; like Johnson, also, his recitation is too monotonous and violent to do justice either to his own writings or those of others. The stranger guest delighted us all by the unaffected charms of his mind and manners. Such visits are among the most high-prized honours which my writings have procured for me."

Miss Seward adds, that she showed him the passage in Cary's Dante where Michael Scott occurs, and that though he admired the spirit and skill of the version, he confessed his inability to find pleasure in the Divina Comedia. "The plan," he said, "appeared to him unhappy; the personal malignity and strange mode of revenge presumptuous and uninteresting."

By the 12th of May he was at Edinburgh for the commencement of the summer session, and the printing seems thenceforth to have gone on at times with great rapidity, at others slowly and irregularly;

the latter Cantos having no doubt been merely blocked out when the first went to press, and his professional avocations, but above all, his Dryden, occasioning frequent interruptions. Just a year had elapsed from his beginning the poem when he penned the Epistle for Canto IV. at Ashestiel; and who, that considers how busily his various pursuits and labours had been crowding the interval, can wonder to be told that

> "Even now, it scarcely seems a day
> Since first I tuned this idle lay—
> A task so often laid aside
> When leisure graver cares denied—
> That now November's dreary gale,
> Whose voice inspired my opening tale,
> That same November gale once more
> Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore."

The fifth Introduction was written in Edinburgh in the month following; that to the last Canto, during the Christmas festivities of Mertoun-house, where, from the first days of his ballad-rhyming down to the close of his life, he, like his bearded ancestor, usually spent that season with the immediate head of the race. The bulky appendix of notes, including a mass of curious antiquarian quotations, must have moved somewhat slowly through the printer's hands; but Marmion was at length ready for publication by the middle of February 1808.

Among the "graver cares" which he alludes to as having interrupted his progress in the poem, the chief were, as has been already hinted, those arising from the pecuniary embarrassments of his brother. These are mentioned in a letter to Miss Seward, dated in August 1807. The lady had, among other things, announced her pleasure in the prospect of a visit from the author of "Madoc," expressed her admiration of "Master Betty, the Young Roscius," and lamented the father's design of placing that "miraculous boy" for three years under a certain "schoolmaster of eminence at Shrewsbury."* Scott says in answer:—

"Since I was favoured with your letter, my dear Miss Seward, I have brought the unpleasant transactions to which my last letter alluded pretty near to a conclusion, much more fortunate than I had ventured to hope. Of my brother's creditors, those connected with him by blood or friendship, showed all the kindness which those ties are in Scotland peculiarly calculated to produce; and what is here much more uncommon, those who had no personal connexion with him or his family, showed a liberality which would not have misbecome the generosity of the English. Upon the whole, his affairs are put in a course of management which I hope will enable him to begin life anew with renovated hopes, and not entirely destitute of the means of recommencing business.

"I am very happy—although a little jealous withal—that you are to have the satisfaction of Southey's personal acquaintance. I am certain you will like the Epic bard exceedingly. Although he does not deign to enter into the mere trifling intercourse of society, yet when a sympathetic spirit calls him forth, no man talks with more animation on literary topics; and perhaps no man in England has read and studied so much with the same powers of making use of the information which he is so indefatigable in acquiring. I despair of reconciling you to my little friend Jeffrey, although I think I could trust to his making some impression on your prepossession, were you to converse with him. I think Southey does himself injustice in supposing the Edinburgh Review, or any other, could have sunk

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* See Miss Seward's Letters, vol. vi. p. 364.

Madoc, even for a time. But the size and price of the work, joined to the frivolity of an age which must be treated as nurses humour children, are sufficient reasons why a poem, on so chaste a model, should not have taken immediately. We know the similar fate of Milton's immortal work, in the witty age of Charles II., at a time when poetry was much more fashionable than at present. As to the division of the profits, I only think that Southey does not understand the gentlemen of *the trade*, emphatically so called, as well as I do. Without any greater degree of *fourberie* than they conceive the long practice of their brethren has rendered matter of prescriptive right, they contrive to clip the author's proportion of profits down to a mere trifle. It is the tale of the fox that went a hunting with the lion, upon condition of equal division of the spoil; and yet I do not quite blame the booksellers, when I consider the very singular nature of their *mystery*. A butcher generally understands something of black cattle, and woe betide the jockey who should presume to exercise his profession without a competent knowledge of horse-flesh. But who ever heard of a bookseller pretending to understand the commodity in which he dealt? They are the only tradesmen in the world who professedly, and by choice, deal in what is called 'a pig in a poke.' When you consider the abominable trash which, by their sheer ignorance, is published every year, you will readily excuse them for the indemnification which they must necessarily obtain at the expense of authors of some value. In fact, though the account between an individual bookseller and such a man as Southey may be iniquitous enough, yet I apprehend that upon the whole the account between *the trade* and the authors of Britain at large is pretty fairly balanced; and what these gentlemen gain at the expense of one class of writers, is lavished, in many cases, in bringing forward other works of little value. I do not know but this, upon the whole, is favourable to the cause of literature. A bookseller publishes twenty books, in hopes of hitting upon one good speculation, as a person buys a parcel of shares in a lottery, in hopes of gaining a prize. Thus the road is open to all, and if the successful candidate is a little fleeced, in order to form petty prizes to console the losing adventurers, still the cause of literature is benefited, since none is excluded from the privilege of competition. This does not apologize for Southey's carelessness about his interest—for,

—— 'his name *is* up, and may go
From Toledo to Madrid.'

"Pray, don't trust Southey too long with Mr. White. He is even more determined in his admiration of old *ruins* than I am. You see I am glad to pick a hole in his jacket, being more jealous of his personal favour in Miss Seward's eyes than of his poetical reputation.

"I quite agree with you about the plan of young Betty's education, and am no great idolater of the learned languages, excepting for what they contain. We spend in youth that time in admiring the wards of the key, which we should employ in opening the cabinet and examining its treasures. A prudent and accomplished friend, who would make instruction acceptable to him for the sake of the amusement which it conveys, would be worth an hundred schools. How can so wonderfully premature a genius, accustomed to excite interest in thousands, be made a member of a class with other boys!"

To return to Scott's own "graver cares" while Marmion was in progress—among them were those of preparing himself for an office to which he was formally appointed soon afterwards, namely, that of Secretary to a Parliamentary Commission for the improvement of Scottish Jurisprudence. This Commission, at the head of which was Sir Islay Campbell, Lord President of the Court of Session, continued in operation for two or three years. Scott's salary, as secretary, was a mere trifle; but he had been led to expect that his exertions in this capacity would lead to better things. In giving a general view of his affairs to his brother-in-law in India, he says:—

"The Clerk of Session who retired to make way for me, retains the appointments, while I do the duty. This was rather a hard bargain, but it was made when the Administration was going to pieces, and I was glad to swim ashore on a plank of the wreck; or, in a word, to be provided for any how, before the new people came in. To be sure, nobody could have foreseen that in a year's time my friends were all to be in again. . . . I am principally pleased with my new appointment as being conferred on me by our chief law lords and King's counsel, and consequently an honourable professional distinction. The employment will be but temporary, but may have consequences important to my future lot in life, if I give due satisfaction in the discharge of it."

He appears accordingly to have submitted to a great deal of miserable drudgery in mastering beforehand the details of the technical controversies which had called for legislatorial interference; and he discharged his functions, as usual, with the warm approbation of his superiors; but no result followed. This is alluded to, among other things, in his correspondence with Mr. Southey, during the printing of Marmion. I shall now go back to extract some of these letters; they will not only enable the reader to fill up the outline of the preceding narrative, as regards Scott's own various occupations at this period, but illustrate very strikingly the readiness with which, however occupied, he would turn aside, whenever he saw any opportunity of forwarding the pursuits and interests of other literary men.

Mr. Southey had written to Scott, on the 27th September, 1807, informing him that he had desired his booksellers to forward a copy of "Palmerin of England," then on the eve of publication—announcing also his "Chronicle of the Cid;" and adding, "I rejoice to hear that we are to have another Lay, and hope we may have as many Last Lays of the Minstrel, as our ancestors had Last Words of Mr. Baxter." Scott's answer was this:

To Robert Southey, Esq.

"Ashestiel, 1st October, 1807.

"My dear Southey,

"It will give me the most sincere pleasure to receive any token of your friendly remembrance, more especially in the shape of a romance of knight-errantry. You know so well how to furbish the arms of a preux chevalier, without converting him *à la Tressan* into a modern light dragoon, that my expectations from Palmerin are very high, and I have given directions to have him sent to this retreat so soon as he reaches Edinburgh. The half-guinea for Hogg's poems was duly received. The uncertainty of your residence prevented the book being sent at the time proposed—it shall be forwarded from Edinburgh to the bookseller at Carlisle, who will probably know how to send it safe. I hope very soon to send you my Life of Dryden, and eke my *last* Lay—(by the way, the former ditty was only proposed as the lay of the *last* Minstrel, not his *last* fitt). I grieve that you have renounced the harp; but still I confide, that, having often touched it so much to the delight of the hearers, you will return to it again after a short interval. As I don't much admire compliments, you may believe me sincere when I tell you, that I have read Madoc three times since my first cursory perusal, and each time with increased admiration of the poetry. But a poem whose merits are of that higher tone does not immediately take with the public at large. It is even possible that during your own life—and may it be as long as every real lover of literature can wish—you must be contented with the applause of the few whom nature has gifted with the rare taste for discriminating in poetry. But the mere *readers of verse* must one day come in, and then Madoc will assume his real place at the feet of Milton. Now this opinion of mine was not that (to speak frankly) which I formed on reading the poem at first, though I then felt much of its merit. I hope you have not and don't mean to part with the copyright. I do not think Wordsworth and you understand the bookselling animal well enough, and wish you would one day try my friend Constable, who would give any terms for a connexion with you. I am most anxious to see the Cid. Do you know I committed a theft upon you (neither of the gait, kine, nor horse, nor outside nor inside plenishing, such as my forefathers sought in Cumberland), but of many verses of the Queen Auragua,* or howsoever you spell her name? I repeated them to a very great lady (the Princess of Wales), who was so much delighted with them, that I think she got them by heart also. She asked a copy, but that I declined to give, under pretence I could not give an accurate one; but I promised to prefer her request to you. If you wish to oblige her R. H., I will get the verses transmitted to her; if not, the thing may be passed over.

"Many thanks for your invitation to Keswick, which I hope to accept, time and season permitting. Is your brother with you? if so, remember me kindly. Where is Wordsworth, and what doth he do? I wrote him a few lines some weeks ago, which I suspect never came to hand. I suppose you are possessed of all relating to the Cid, otherwise I would mention an old romance, chiefly relating to his banishment, which is in John Frere's possession, and from which he made some lively translations in a tripping Alexandrine stanza. I dare say he would communicate the original, if it could be of the least use.† I am an humble petitioner that your interesting Spanish ballads be in some shape appended to the Cid. Be assured they will give him wings. There is a long letter written with a pen like a stick. I beg my respects to Mrs. Southey, in which Mrs. Scott joins; and I am, very truly and affectionately, yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, November, 1807.

"My dear Southey,

"I received your letter some time, but had then no opportunity to see Constable, as I was residing at some distance from Edinburgh. Since I came to town I spoke to Constable, whom I find anxious to be connected with you. It occurs to me that the only difference between him and our fathers in the Row is on the principle contained in the old proverb:—*He that would thrive—must rise by five;—He that has thriven—may lye till seven.* Constable *would* thrive, and therefore bestows more pains than our fathers who *have* thriven. I do not speak this without book, because I know he has pushed off several books which had got aground in the Row. But, to say the truth, I have always found advantage in keeping on good terms with several of the trade, but never suffering any one of them to consider me as a monopoly. They are very like farmers, who thrive best at a high rent; and, in general, take most pains to sell a book that has cost them money to purchase. The bad sale of Thalaba is truly astonishing; it should have sold off in a twelvemonth at farthest.

"As you occasionally review, will you forgive my suggesting a circumstance for your consideration, to which you will give exactly the degree of weight you please. I am perfectly certain that Jeffrey would think himself both happy and honoured in receiving any communication which you might send him, choosing your books and expressing your own opinions. The terms of the Edinburgh Review are ten guineas a-sheet, and will shortly be advanced considerably. I question if the same unpleasant sort of work is any where else so well compensated. The only reason which occurs to me as likely to prevent your affording the Edinburgh some critical assistance, is the severity of the criticisms upon Madoc and Thalaba. I do not know if this will be at all removed by assuring you, as I can do upon my honour, that Jeffrey has, notwithstanding the flippancy of these articles, the most sincere respect both for your person and talents. The other day I designedly led the conversation on that subject, and had the same reason I always have had to consider his attack as arising from a radical difference in point of taste, or rather feeling of poetry, but by no means from any thing approaching either to enmity or a false conception of your talents. I do not think that a difference of this sort should prevent you, if you are otherwise disposed to do so, from carrying a proportion at least of your critical labours to a much better market than the Annual.* Pray think of this, and if you are disposed to give your assistance, I am positively certain that I can transact the matter with the utmost delicacy towards both my friends. I am certain you may add £100 a-year, or double the sum, to your income in this way with almost no trouble, and, as times go, that is no trifle.

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* The ballad of Queen Orraca was first published in the Edinburgh Annual for 1808.

† Mr. Southey introduced, in the appendix to his Chronicle of the Cid, some specimens of Mr. Frere's admirable translation of the ancient *Poema del Cid*, to which Scott here alludes.

"I have to thank you for Palmerin, which has been my afternoon reading for some days. I like it very much, although it is, I think, considerably inferior to the Amadis. But I wait with double anxiety for the Cid, in which I expect to find very much information as well as amusement. One discovery I have made is, that we understand little or nothing of Don Quixote except by the Spanish romances. The English and French romances throw very little light on the subject of the doughty cavalier of La Mancha. I am thinking of publishing a small edition of the Morte Arthur, merely to preserve that ancient record of English chivalry; but my copy is so late as 1637, so I must look out for earlier editions to collate. That of Caxton is, I believe, *introuvable*. Will you give me your opinion on this project? I have written to Mr. Frere about the Spanish books, but I do not very well know if my letter has reached him. I expect to bring Constable to a point respecting the poem of Hindoo Mythology.† I should esteem myself very fortunate in being assisting in bringing forth a twin brother of Thalaba. Wordsworth is harshly treated in the Edinburgh Review, but Jeffrey gives the sonnets as much praise as he usually does to any body. I made him admire the song of Lord Clifford's minstrel, which I like exceedingly myself. But many of Wordsworth's lesser poems are *caviare*, not only to the multitude, but to all who judge of poetry by the established rules of criticism. Some of them, I can safely say, I like the better for these aberrations; in others they get beyond me—at any rate, they ought to have been more cautiously hazarded. I hope soon to send you a Life of Dryden and a lay of former times. The latter I would willingly have bestowed more time upon; but what can I do?—my supposed poetical turn ruined me in my profession, and the least it can do is to give me some occasional assistance instead of it. Mrs. Scott begs kind compliments to Mrs. Southey, and I am always kindly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Mr. Southey, in reply to this letter, stated at length certain considerations, political, moral, and critical, which rendered it impossible for him to enlist himself on any terms in the corps of the Edinburgh Reviewers. In speaking of his friend Wordsworth's last work, which had been rather severely handled in this Review, he expresses his regret that the poet, in his magnificent sonnet on Killiecrankie, should have introduced the Viscount of Dundee without apparent censure of his character; and passing to Scott's own affairs, he says, "Marmion is expected as impatiently by me as he is by ten thousand others. Believe me, Scott, no man of real genius was ever a puritanical stickler for correctness, or fastidious about any faults except his own. The best artists, both in poetry and painting, have produced the most. Give us more lays, and correct them at leisure for after editions—not laboriously, but when the amendment comes naturally and unsought for. It never does to sit down doggedly to correct." The rest, Scott's answer will sufficiently explain.

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* The Annual Review, conducted by Dr. Arthur Aikin, commenced in 1802, and was discontinued in 1808.

† The Curse of Kehama was published by Longman & Co. in 1810.

To Robert Southey, Esq.

Edinburgh, 15th December, 1807.

"Dear Southey,

"I yesterday received your letter, and can perfectly enter into your ideas on the subject of the Review:—indeed I dislike most extremely the late stream of politics which they have adopted, as it seems, even on their own showing, to be cruelly imprudent. Who ever thought he did a service to a person engaged in an arduous conflict, by proving to him, or attempting to prove to him, that he must necessarily be beaten; and what effect can such language have but to accelerate the accomplishment of the prophecy which it contains? And as for Catholic Emancipation,—I am not, God knows, a bigot in religious matters, nor a friend to persecution: but if a particular sect of religionists are *ipso facto* connected with foreign politics—and placed under the spiritual direction of a class of priests, whose unrivalled dexterity and activity are increased by the rules which detach them from the rest of the world—I humbly think that we may be excused from intrusting to them those places in the state where the influence of such a clergy, who act under the direction of a passive tool of our worst foe, is likely to be attended with the most fatal consequences. If a gentleman chooses to walk about with a couple of pounds of gunpowder in his pocket, if I give him the shelter of my roof, I may at least be permitted to exclude him from the seat next to the fire. So thinking, I have felt your scruples in doing any thing for the Review of late.

"As for my good friend Dundee, I cannot admit his culpability in the extent you allege; and it is scandalous in the Sunday bard to join in your condemnation, 'and yet come of a noble Græme! I admit he was *tant soit peu* savage, but he was a noble savage; and the beastly Covenanters against whom he acted, hardly had any claim to be called men, unless what was founded on their walking upon their hind feet. You can hardly conceive the perfidy, cruelty, and stupidity of these people according to the accounts they have themselves preserved. But I admit I had many cavalier prejudices instilled into me, as my ancestor was a Killiecrankie man.

"I am very glad the Morte Arthur is in your hands; it has been long a favourite of mine, and I intended, to have made it a handsome book, in the shape of a small antique-looking quarto, with wooden vignettes of costume. I wish you would not degrade him into a squat 12mo; but admit the temptation you will probably feel to put it into the same shape with Palmerin and Amadis. If on this, or any occasion, you can cast a job in the way of my friend Ballantyne, I should consider it as a particular personal favour, and the convenience would be pretty near the same to you, as your proofs must come by post at any rate. If I can assist you about this matter, command my services. The late Duke of Roxburghe once showed me some curious remarks of his own upon the genealogy of the Knights of the Round Table. He was a curious and unwearied reader of romance, and made many observations in writing; whether they are now accessible or no, I am doubtful. Do you follow the metrical or the printed books in your account of the Round Table, and would your task be at all facilitated by the use of a copy of Sir Launcelot, from the press of Jehan Davis, which I have by me?

"As to literary envy, I agree with you, dear Southey, in believing it was never felt by men who had any powers of their own to employ to better purpose than in crossing or jostling their companions; and I can say, with a safe conscience, that I am most delighted with praise from those who convince me of their good taste by admiring the genius of my contemporaries. Believe me ever, dear Southey, with best compliments to Mrs. S., yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

The following letter to another accomplished and attached friend, will bring us back to the completion of Marmion.

To the Right Hon. the Lady Louisa Stuart, London.

"Edinburgh, 19th January, 1808.

"I am much flattered, dear Lady Louisa, by your kind and encouraging remembrance. Marmion is, at this instant, gasping upon Flodden field, and there I have been obliged to leave him for these few days in the death pangs. I hope I shall find time enough this morning to knock him on the head with two or three thumping stanzas. I thought I should have seen Lady Douglas while she was at Dalkeith, but all the Clerks of Session (excepting myself, who have at present no salary, are subject to the gout, and one of them was unluckily visited with a fit on the day I should have been at the Duke's, so I had his duty and my own to discharge. Pray, Lady Louisa, don't look for Marmion in Hawthornden or any where else, excepting in the too thick quarto which bears his name. As to the fair * * * * * * *, I beg her pardon with all my heart and spirit; but I rather think that the habit of writing novels or romances, whether in prose or verse, is unfavourable to rapid credulity; at least these sort of folks know that they can easily make fine stories themselves, and will be therefore as curious in examining those of other folks as a cunning vintner in detecting the sophistication of his neighbour's claret by the help of his own experience. Talking of fair ladies and fables reminds me of Mr. Sharpe's ballads,* which I suppose Lady Douglas carried with her to Bothwell. They exhibit, I think, a very considerable portion of imagination, and occasionally though not uniformly, great flow of versification. There is one verse, or rather the whole description of a musical ghost lady sitting among the ruins of her father's tower, that pleased me very much. But his language is too flowery and even tawdry, and I quarrelled with a lady in the first poem who yielded up her affection upon her lover showing his white teeth. White teeth ought to be taken great care of and set great store by; but I cannot allow them to be an object of passionate admiration—it is too like subduing a lady's heart by grinning. Grieved am I for Lady Douglas's indisposition, which I hope will be short, and I am sure will be tolerable with such stores of amusement around her. Last night, I saw all the Dalkeith family presiding in that happy scene of mixed company and Babylonian confusion, the Queen's Assembly. I also saw Mr. Allison there. I hope your ladyship has not renounced your intention of coming to Edinburgh for a day or two, and that I shall have the honour to see you. We have a very diverting lion and sundry wild beasts; but the most meritorious is Miss Lydia White, who is what Oxonians call a lioness of the first order, with stockings nineteen times nine dyed blue, very lively, very good humoured, and extremely absurd. It is very diverting to see sober Scotch ladies staring at this phenomenon. I am, with great respect, your ladyship's honoured and obliged

WALTER SCOTT."

Marmion was published on the 23d of February. The letter which accompanied the presentation copy to Sunninghill, had been preceded a few weeks before by one containing an abstract of some of Weber's German researches, which were turned to account in the third edition of Sir Tristrem; but Mr. Ellis was at this time in a very feeble state of health, and that communication had elicited no reply.

To George Ellis, Esq.

"Edinburgh, February 23, 1808.

'Sleepest thou, wakest thou, George Ellis?'

"Be it known that this letter is little better than a *fehde brief*,—as to the meaning of which, is it not written in Wachter's Thesaurus and the Lexicon of Adelung? To expound more vernacularly, I wrote you, I know not how long ago, a swinging epistle of and concerning German Romances, with some discoveries not of my own discovering, and other matter not furiously to the present purpose. And this I caused to be conveyed to you by *ane gentil knizt, Sir William Forbes, knizt*, who assures me he left it as directed, at Sir Peter Parker's. 'Since,' to vary my style to that of the ledger, 'none of yours.' To avenge myself of this unusual silence, which is a manifest usurpation of my privileges (being the worst correspondent in the world, Heber excepted), I have indited to you an epistle in verse, and that I may be sure of its reaching your hands, I have caused to be thrown off 2000 copies thereof, that you may not plead ignorance.

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* A small volume entitled "Metrical Legends and other Poems," was published in 1807 by Scott's friend, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq.

"This is oracular, but will be explained by perusing the Introduction to the 5th canto of a certain dumpy quarto, entitled Marmion, a Tale of Flodden-field, of which I have to beg your acceptance of a copy. 'So wonder on till time makes all things plain.' One thing I am sure you will admit, and that is, that—'the hobby-horse is not forgot;' nay, you will see I have paraded in my introductions a plurality of hobby-horses—a whole stud, on each of which I have, in my day, been accustomed to take an airing. This circumstance will also gratify our friend Douce, whose lucubrations have been my study for some days.* They will, I fear, be *caviare* to the multitude, and even to the *soi-disant* connoisseurs, who have never found by experience what length of time, of reading, and of reflection is necessary to collect the archæological knowledge of which he has displayed such profusion. The style would also, in our Scotch phrase, *thole a mends*, i. e. admit of improvement. But his extensive and curious researches place him at the head of the class of black-letter antiquaries; and his knowledge is communicated without the manifest irritation—which his contemporaries have too often displayed in matters of controversy,—without ostentation, and without self-sufficiency. I hope the success of his work will encourage this modest and learned antiquary to give us more collectanea. There are few things I read with more pleasure. Charlotte joins in kindest respects to Mrs. Ellis. I have some hopes of being in town this spring, but I fear you will be at Bath. When you have run over Marmion, I hope you will remember how impatient I shall be to hear your opinion *sans phrase*. I am sensible I run some risk of being thought to fall below my former level, but those that will play for the gammon must take their chance of this. I am also anxious to have particular news of your health. Ever yours faithfully,

W. S."

The letter reached Ellis before the book; but how well he anticipated the immediate current of criticism, his answer will show.

"Before I have seen the stranger," he says, "and while my judgment is unwarped by her seduction, I think I can venture, from what I remember of the Lay to anticipate the fluctuations of public opinion concerning her. The first decision respecting the Last Minstrel was, that he was evidently the production of a strong and vivid mind, and not quite unworthy the author of Glenfinlas and the Eve of St. John; but that it was difficult to eke out so long a poem with uniform spirit; that success generally emboldens writers to become more careless in a second production; that—— in short, months elapsed, before one-tenth of our wise critics had discovered that a long poem which no one reader could bring himself to lay down till he had arrived at the last line, was a composition destined perhaps to suggest new rules of criticism, but certainly not amenable to the tribunal of a taste formed on the previous examination of models of a perfectly different nature. That Minstrel is now in its turn become a standard; Marmion will therefore be compared with this *metre*, and will most probably be in the first instance pronounced too long, or too short, or improperly divided, or &c. &c. &c., till the sage and candid critics are compelled, a second time, by the united voice of all who can read at all, to confess that '*aut prodesse aut delectare*' is the only real standard of poetical merit. One of my reasons for liking your Minstrel was, that the subject was purely and necessarily *poetical*; whereas my sincere and sober opinion of all the *epic poems* I have ever read, the Odyssey perhaps excepted, is that they ought to have been written in prose; and hence, though I think with Mackintosh, that '*forte epos acer ut nemo Varius scribit*,' I rejoice in your choice of a subject which cannot be considered as epic, or conjure up in the memory a number of fantastic rules, which, like Harpies, would spoil the banquet offered to the imagination. A few days, however, will, I hope, enable me to write *avec connaissance de cause*."

I have, I believe, alluded, in a former chapter of this narrative, to a remark which occurs in Mr. Southey's Life of Cowper, namely, that a man's character may be judged of even more surely by the letters which his friends addressed to him, than by those which he himself penned; and I cannot but think that—freely as Scott's own feelings and opinions were poured from his head and heart to all whom he considered as worthy of a wise and good man's confidence—the openness and candour with which the best and most sagacious of his friends wrote to him about his own literary productions, will be considered hereafter (when all the glories of this age shall, like him, have passed away), as affording a striking confirmation of the truth of the biographer's observation. It was, thus, for example, that Mr. Southey himself, who happened to be in London when Marmion came out, expressed himself to the author, on his return to Keswick:—

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* Mr. Douce's Illustrations of Shakspeare were published late in 1807.

"Half the poem I had read at Heber's before my own copy arrived. I went punctually to breakfast with him, and he was long enough dressing to let me devour so much of it. The story is made of better materials than the Lay, yet they are not so well fitted together. As a whole, it has not pleased me so much—in parts it has pleased me more. There is nothing so finely conceived in your former poem as the death of Marmion: there is nothing finer in its conception any where. The introductory epistles I did not wish away, because, as poems, they gave me great pleasure; but I wished them at the end of the volume, or at the beginning—any where except where they were. My taste is perhaps peculiar in disliking all interruptions in narrative poetry. When the poet lets his story sleep, and talks in his own person, it has to me the same sort of unpleasant effect that is produced at the end of an act. You are alive to know what follows, and lo—down comes the curtain, and the fiddlers begin with their abominations. The general opinion, however, is with me, in this particular instance, ..."

I have no right to quote the rest of Mr. Southey's letter, which is filled chiefly with business of his own; but towards its close, immediately after mentioning a princely instance of generosity on the part of his friend Mr. Walter Savage Landor to a brother poet, he has a noble sentence, which I hope to be pardoned for extracting, as equally applicable to his own character and that of the man he was addressing—"Great poets," says the author of Thalaba, "have no envy; little ones are full of it! I doubt whether any man ever criticised a good poem maliciously, who had not written a bad one himself." I must not omit to mention, that on his way from London down to Keswick, Mr. Southey had visited at Stamford the late industrious antiquary, Octavius Gilchrist, who was also at this time one of Scott's frequent correspondents. Mr. Gilchrist writes (May 21) to Scott, "Southey pointed out to me a passage in Marmion, which he thought finer than any thing he remembered."

Mr. Wordsworth knew Scott too well not to use the same masculine freedom.

"Thank you," he says, "for Marmion. I think your end has been attained. That it is not the end which I should wish you to propose to yourself, you will be well aware, from what you know of my notions of composition, both as to matter and manner. In the circle of my acquaintance, it seems as well liked as the Lay, though I have heard that in the world it is not so. Had the poem been much better than the Lay, it could scarcely have satisfied the public, which has too much of the monster, the moral monster, in its composition. The spring has burst out upon us all at once, and the vale is now in exquisite beauty; a gentle shower has fallen this morning, and I hear the thrush, who has built in my orchard, singing amain! How happy we should be to see you here again! Ever, my dear Scott, your sincere friend, W. W."

I pass over a multitude of the congratulatory effusions of inferior names, but must not withhold part of a letter on a folio sheet written not in the first hurry of excitement, but on the second of May, two months after Marmion had reached Sunninghill.

"I have," says Ellis, "been endeavoring to divest myself of those prejudices to which the impression on my own palate would naturally give rise, and to discover the sentiments of those who have only tasted the general compound, after seeing the sweetmeats picked out by my comrades and myself. I have severely questioned all my friends whose critical discernment I could fairly trust, and mean to give you the honest result of their collective opinions; for which reason, inasmuch as I shall have a good deal to say, besides which there seems to be a natural connexion between foolscap and criticism, I have ventured on this expanse of paper. In the first place, then, all the world are agreed that you are like the elephant mentioned in the Spectator, who was the greatest elephant in the world except himself, and consequently, that the only question at issue is, whether the Lay or Marmion shall be reputed the most pleasing poem in our language—save and except one or two of Dryden's fables. But, with respect to the two rivals, I think the Lay is, on the whole, the greatest favourite. It is admitted that the fable of Marmion is greatly superior—that it contains a greater diversity of character—that it inspires more interest—and that it is by no means inferior in point of poetical expression; but it is contended that the incident of Deloraine's journey to Melrose surpasses any thing in Marmion, and that the personal appearance of the Minstrel, who, though the last, is by far the most charming of all minstrels, is by no means compensated by the idea of an author shorn of his picturesque beard, deprived of his harp, and writing letters to his intimate friends. These introductory epistles, indeed, though excellent in themselves, are in fact only interruptions to the fable; and accordingly, nine out of ten have perused them separately, either after or before the poem—and it is obvious that they cannot have produced, in either case, the effect which was proposed—viz., of relieving the readers' attention, and giving variety to the whole. Perhaps, continue these critics, it would be fair to say that Marmion delights us in spite of its introductory epistles—while the Lay owes its principal charm to the venerable old minstrel:—the two poems may be considered as equally respectable to the talents of the author; but the first, being a more perfect whole, will be more constantly preferred. Now, all this may be very true—but it is no less true that every body has already read Marmion *more than once*—that it is the subject of general conversation—that it delights all ages and all tastes, and that it is universally allowed to improve upon a second reading. My own opinion is, that both the productions are equally good in their different ways: yet, upon the whole, I had rather be the author of Marmion than of the Lay, because I think its species of excellence of much more difficult attainment. What degree of bulk may be essentially necessary to the corporeal part of an Epic poem, I know not; but sure I am that the story of Marmion might have furnished twelve books as easily as six—that the masterly character of Constance would not have been less bewitching had it been much more minutely painted—and that De Wilton might have been dilated with great ease, and even to considerable advantage;—in short, that had it been your intention merely to exhibit a spirited romantic story, instead of making that story subservient to the delineation of the manners which prevailed at a certain period of our history, the number and variety of your characters would have suited any scale of painting. Marmion is to Deloraine what Tom Jones is to Joseph Andrews—the varnish of high breeding nowhere diminishes the prominence of the features—and the minion of a king is as light and sinewy a cavalier as the Borderer,—rather less ferocious, more wicked, less fit for the hero of a ballad, and far more for the hero of a regular poem. On the whole, I can sincerely assure you, '*sans phrase*,' that, had I seen Marmion without knowing the author, I should have ranked it with Theodore and Honoria,—that is to say, on the very top shelf of English poetry. Now for faults." . . . .

Mr. Ellis proceeds to notice some minor blemishes, which he hoped to see erased in a future copy; but as most, if not all, of these were sufficiently dwelt on by the professional critics, whose strictures are affixed to the poem in the last collective edition, and as, moreover, Scott did not avail himself of any of the hints thus publicly, as well as privately tendered for his guidance, I shall not swell my page by transcribing more of this elegant letter. The part I have given may no doubt be considered as an epitome of the very highest and most refined of London table-talk on the subject of Marmion, during the first freshness of its popularity. and before the Edinburgh Review, the only critical journal of which any one in those days thought very seriously, had pronounced its verdict.

When we consider some parts of that judgment, together with the author's personal intimacy with the editor, and the aid which he had of late been affording to the Journal itself, it must be allowed that Mr. Jeffrey acquitted himself on this occasion in a manner highly creditable to his courageous sense of duty; and that he relied on being considered as doing so by the poet himself, illustrates equally his sagacity, and the manly candour and strength of mind, for which Scott had all along been esteemed and honoured, the most by those who knew him the best. The Number of the Edinburgh Review containing the article on Marmion, was accompanied by this note:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Castle Street.

"Queen Street, Tuesday.

"Dear Scott—If I did not give you credit for more magnanimity than any other of your irritable tribe, I should scarcely venture to put this into your hands. As it is, I do it with no little solicitude, and earnestly hope that it will make no difference in the friendship which has hitherto subsisted between us. I have spoken of your poem exactly as I think, and though I cannot reasonably suppose that you will be pleased with every thing I have said, it would mortify me very severely to believe I had given you pain. If you have any amity left for me, you will not delay very long to tell me so. In the mean time, I am very sincerely yours,

F. Jeffrey."

The reader who has the Edinburgh Review for April, 1808, will I hope pause here and read the article as it stands; endeavouring to put himself into the situation of Scott when it was laid upon his desk, together with this ominous billet from the critic, who, as it happened, had been for some time engaged to dine that same Tuesday at his table in Castle Street. I have not room to transcribe the whole; but no unfair notion of its spirit and tenor may be gathered from one or two of the principal paragraphs. After an ingenious little dissertation on epic poetry in general, the reviewer says—

"We are inclined to suspect that the success of the work now before us will be less brilliant than that of the author's former publication, though we are ourselves of opinion that its intrinsic merits are nearly, if not altogether equal; and that, if it had had the fate to be the elder born, it would have inherited as fair a portion of renown as has fallen to the lot of its predecessor. It is a good deal longer, indeed, and somewhat more ambitious; and it is rather clearer, that it has greater faults than that it has greater beauties—though, for our own parts, we are inclined to believe in both propositions. It has more flat and tedious passages, and more ostentation of historical and antiquarian lore; but it has also greater richness and variety, both of character and incident; and if it has less sweetness and pathos in the softer passages, it has certainly more vehemence and force of colouring in the loftier and busier representations of action and emotion. The place of the prologuising minstrel is but ill supplied, indeed, by the epistolary dissertations which are prefixed to each book of the present poem; and the ballad-pieces and mere episodes which it contains have less finish and poetical beauty; but there is more airiness and spirit in the higher delineations; and the story, if not more skilfully conducted, is at least better complicated, and extended through a wider field of adventure. The characteristics of both, however, are evidently the same; a broken narrative—a redundancy of minute description—bursts of unequal and energetic poetry—and a general tone of spirit and animation, unchecked by timidity or affectation, and unchastened by any great delicacy of taste or elegance of fancy."

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"But though we think this last romance of Mr. Scott's about as good as the former, and allow that it affords great indications of poetical talent, we must remind our readers that we never entertained much partiality for this sort of composition, and ventured on a former occasion to express our regret that an author endowed with such talents should consume them in imitations of obsolete extravagance, and in the representation of manners and sentiments in which none of his readers can be supposed to take much interest, except the few who can judge of their exactness. To write a modern romance of chivalry, seems to be much such a phantasy as to build a modern abbey or an English pagoda. For once, however, it may be excused as a pretty caprice of genius; but a second production of the same sort is entitled to less indulgence, and imposes a sort of duty to drive the author from so idle a task, by a fair exposition of the faults which are, in a manner, inseparable from its execution. His genius, seconded by the omnipotence of fashion, has brought chivalry again into temporary favour. Fine ladies and gentlemen now talk indeed of donjons, keeps, tabards, scutcheons, tressures, caps of maintenance, portcullises, wimples, and we know not what besides; just as they did in the days of Dr. Darwin's popularity of gnomes, sylphs, oxygen, gossamer, polygynia, and polyandria. That fashion, however, passed rapidly away, and Mr. Scott should take care that a different sort of pedantry does not produce the same effects."

The detailed exposition of faults follows; and it is, I am sure, done in a style on which the critic cannot now reflect with perfect equanimity, any more than on the lofty and decisive tone of the sweeping paragraphs by which it was introduced. All this, however, I can suppose Scott to have gone through with great composure; but he must, I think, have wondered, to say the least, when he found himself accused of having "throughout neglected Scottish feelings and Scottish characters!"—He who had just poured out all the patriotic enthusiasm of his soul in so many passages of Marmion which every Scotchman to the end of time will have by heart, painted the capital, the court, the camp, the heroic old chieftains of Scotland in colours instinct with a fervour that can never die; and dignified the most fatal of her national misfortunes by a celebration as loftily pathetic as ever blended pride with sorrow,—a battle-piece which even his critic had pronounced to be the noblest save in Homer! But not even this injustice was likely to wound him very deeply. Coming from one of the recent witnesses of his passionate agitation on *the Mound*, perhaps he would only smile at it.

At all events, Scott could make allowance for the petulancies into which men the least disposed to injure the feelings of others will sometimes be betrayed, when the critical rod is in their hands. He assured Mr. Jeffrey that the article had not disturbed his digestion, though he hoped neither his booksellers nor the public would agree with the opinions it expressed; and begged he would come to dinner at the hour previously appointed. Mr. Jeffrey appeared accordingly, and was received by his host with the frankest cordiality; but had the mortification to observe that the mistress of the house, though perfectly polite, was not quite so easy with him as usual. She, too, behaved herself with exemplary civility during the dinner; but could not help saying, in her broken English, when her guest was departing, "Well, good night, Mr. Jeffrey—dey tell me you have abused Scott in de Review, and I hope Mr. Constable has paid *you* very well for writing it." This anecdote was not perhaps worth giving; but it has been printed already in an exaggerated shape, so I thought it as well to present the edition which I have derived from the lips of all the three persons concerned. No one, I am sure, will think the worse of any of them for it,—least of all of Mrs. Scott. She might well be pardoned, if she took to herself more than her own share in the misadventures of the most affectionate of protectors. It was, I believe, about this time when, as Scott has confessed, "the popularity of Marmion gave him such a *heeze* he had for a moment almost lost his footing," that a shrewd and sly observer, Mrs. Grant of Laggan, said, wittily enough, upon leaving a brilliant assembly where the poet had been surrounded by all the buzz and glare of fashionable ecstasy,—"Mr. Scott always seems to me like a glass, through which the rays of admiration pass without sensibly affecting it; but the bit of paper that lies beside it will presently be in a blaze—and no wonder."

I shall not, after so much of and about criticism, say any thing more of Marmion in this place, than that I have always considered it as, on the whole, the greatest of Scott's poems. There is a certain light, easy, virgin charm about the Lay, which we look for in vain through the subsequent volumes of his verse; but the superior strength, and breadth, and boldness both of conception and execution in the Marmion appear to me indisputable. The great blot, the combination of *mean felony* with so many noble qualities in the character of the hero, was, as the poet says, severely commented on at the time by the most ardent of his early friends, Leyden; but though he admitted the justice of that criticism, he chose "to let the tree lie as it had fallen." He was also sensible that many of the subordinate and connecting parts of the narrative are flat, harsh, and obscure—but would never make any serious attempt to do away with those imperfections; and perhaps they, after all, heighten by contrast the effect of the passages of high-wrought enthusiasm which alone he considered, in after days, with satisfaction. As for the "epistolary dissertations," it must, I take it, be allowed that they interfered with the flow of the story, when readers were turning the leaves with the first ardour of curiosity; and they were not, in fact, originally intended to be interwoven in any fashion with the romance of Marmion. Though the author himself does not allude to, and had perhaps forgotten the circumstance, when writing the Introductory Essay of 1830—they were announced, by an advertisement, early in 1807, as "Six Epistles from Ettrick Forrest," to be published in a separate volume, similar to that of the Ballads and Lyrical Pieces; and perhaps it might have been better that this first plan had been adhered to. But however that may be, are there any pages, among all he ever wrote, that one would be more sorry he should not have written? They are among the most delicious portraitures that genius ever painted of itself,—buoyant, virtuous, happy genius—exulting in its own energies, yet possessed and mastered by a clear, calm, modest mind, and happy only in diffusing happiness around it.

With what gratification those Epistles were read by the friends to whom they were addressed, it would be superfluous to show. He had, in fact, painted them almost as fully as himself; and who might not have been proud to find a place in such a gallery? The tastes and habits of six of those men, in whose intercourse Scott found the greatest pleasure when his fame was approaching its meridian splendour, are thus preserved for posterity; and when I reflect with what avidity we catch at the least hint which seems to afford us a glimpse of the intimate circle of any great poet of former ages, I cannot but believe that posterity would have held this record precious, even had the individuals been in themselves far less remarkable than a Rose, an Ellis, a Heber, a Skene, a Marriott, and an Erskine.

Many other friends, however, have found a part in these affectionate sketches; and I doubt whether any manifestation of public applause afforded the poet so much pleasure as the letter in which one of these, alluded to in the fourth Epistle as then absent from Scotland by reason of his feeble health, acknowledged the emotions that had been stirred in him when he came upon that unexpected page. This was Colin Mackenzie of Portmore, the same who beat him in a competition of rhymes at the High School, and whose ballad of *Ellandonnan Castle* had been introduced into the third volume of the Minstrelsy. This accomplished and singularly modest man, now no more, received Marmion at Lympstone.

> "My dear Walter," he says, "amidst the greetings that will crowd on you, I know that those of a hearty, sincere, admiring old friend will not be coldly taken. I am not going to attempt an enumeration of beauties, but I must thank you for the elegant and delicate allusion in which you express your friendship for myself—Forbes—and, above all, that sweet memorial of his late excellent father.* I find I have got the *mal du pays*, and must return to enjoy the sight and society of a few chosen friends. You are not unaware of the place you hold on my list, and your description of our *committees*† has inspired me with tenfold ardour to renew a pleasure so highly enjoyed, and remembered with such enthusiasm. Adieu, my dear friend. Ever yours, C. M."

His next-door neighbour at Ashestiel, Mr. Pringle of Whytbank, "the long-descended laird of Yair," writes not less touchingly on the verses in the 2d Epistle, where his beautiful place is mentioned, and the poet introduces

> "those sportive boys,
> Companions of his mountain joys,"

and paints the rapture with which they had heard him "call Wallace rampart holy ground."

> "Your own benevolent heart," says the good laird, "would have enjoyed the scene, could you have witnessed the countenances of my little flock grouped round

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* Mr. Mackenzie had married a daughter of Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, Bart., the biographer of Beattie.

† The supper meetings of the Cavalry Club.—See *Marmion*, Introduction to Canto IV.

your book; and perhaps you would have discovered that the father, though the least audible at that moment, was not the most insensible to the honour bestowed upon his children and his parent stream, both alike dear to his heart. May my boys feel an additional motive to act well, that they may cast no discredit upon their early friend!"

But there was one personal allusion which, almost before his ink was dry, the poet would fain have cancelled. Lord Scott, the young heir of Buccleuch, whose casual absence from "Yarrow's bowers" was regretted in that same epistle (addressed to his tutor, Mr. Marriott)—

"No youthful baron 's left to grace
The forest sheriff's lonely chase,
And ape in manly step and tone
The majesty of Oberon."

—this promising boy had left Yarrow to visit it no more. He died a few days after Marmion was published, and Scott, in writing on the event to his uncle Lord Montagu (to whom the poem was inscribed), signified a fear that these verses might now serve but to quicken the sorrows of the mother. Lord Montagu answers,—

"I have been able to ascertain Lady Dalkeith's feelings in a manner that will, I think, be satisfactory to you, particularly as it came from herself, without my giving her the pain of being asked. In a letter I received yesterday, giving directions about some books, she writes as follows:—'And pray send me Marmion too—this may seem odd to you, but at some moments I am soothed by things which at other times drive me almost mad.'"

On the 7th of April, Scott says to Lady Louisa Stewart—

"The death of poor dear Lord Scott was such a stunning blow to me, that I really felt for some time totally indifferent to the labours of literary correction. I had very great hopes from that boy, who was of an age to form, on the principles of his father and grandfather, his feelings towards the numerous families who depend on them. But God's will be done. I intended to have omitted the lines referring to him in Marmion in the second edition; for as to adding any, I could as soon write the Iliad. But I am now glad I altered my intention, as Lady Dalkeith has sent for the book, and dwells with melancholy pleasure on whatever recalls the memory of the poor boy. She has borne her distress like an angel, as she is, and always has been; but God only can cure the wounds he inflicts."

One word more as to these personal allusions. While he was correcting a second proof of the passage where Pitt and Fox are mentioned together, at Stanmore Priory, in April 1807, Lord Abercorn suggested that the compliment to the Whig statesman ought to be still further heightened, and several lines—

"For talents mourn untimely lost,
When best employed, and wanted most," &c.—[*]

were added accordingly. I have heard, indeed, that they came from the accomplished Marquis's own pen. Ballantyne, however, from some inadvertance, had put the sheet to press before the *revise*, as it is called, arrived in Edinburgh, and some few copies got abroad in which the additional couplets were omitted. A London journal (the Morning Chronicle) was stupid and malignant enough to insinuate that the author had his presentation copies struck off with, or without, them—according as they were for Whig or Tory hands. I mention the circumstance now, only because I see by a letter of Heber's that Scott had thought it worth his while to contradict the absurd charge in the newspapers of the day.

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[*] In place of this couplet, and the ten lines which follow it, the original MS. of Marmion has only the following:—

"If genius high, and judgment sound,
And wit that loved to play, not wound,
And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve, combine,
Could save one mortal of the herd
From error—Fox had never err'd."

The feelings of political partisanship find no place in this poem; but though the Edinburgh reviewers chose to complain of its "manifest neglect of *Scottish* feelings," I take leave to suspect that the boldness and energy of *British* patriotism which breathes in so many passages, may have had more share than that alleged omission in pointing the pen that criticised Marmion. Scott had sternly and indignantly rebuked and denounced the then too prevalent spirit of anti-national despondence; he had put the trumpet to his lips, and done his part, at least, to sustain the hope and resolution of his countrymen in that struggle from which it was the doctrine of the Edinburgh Review that no sane observer of the times could anticipate any thing but ruin and degradation. He must ever be considered as the "mighty minstrel" of the Antigallican war; and it was Marmion that first announced him in that character.

Be all this as it may, Scott's connexion with the Edinburgh Review was now broken off; and indeed it was never renewed, except in one instance, many years after, when the strong wish to serve poor Maturin shook him for a moment from his purpose. The loftiest and purest of human beings seldom act but under a mixture of motives, and I shall not attempt to guess in what proportions he was swayed by aversion to the political doctrines which the journal had lately been avowing with increased openness—by dissatisfaction with its judgments of his own works—or, lastly, by the feeling that, whether those judgments were or were not just, it was but an idle business for him to assist by his own pen the popularity of the vehicle that diffused them. That he was influenced more or less by all of these considerations, appears highly probable; and I fancy I can trace some indications of each of them in a letter with which I am favoured by an old friend of mine,—a warm lover of literature, and a sincere admirer both of Scott and Jeffrey, and though numbered among the Tories in the House of Commons, yet one of the most liberal section of his party,—who happened to visit Scotland shortly after the article on Marmion appeared, and has set down his recollections of the course of table-talk at a dinner where he for the first time met Scott in company with the brilliant editor of the Edinburgh Review.

"There were," he says, "only a few people besides the two lions—and assuredly I have seldom passed a more agreeable day. A thousand subjects of literature, antiquities, and manners were started; and much was I struck, as you may well suppose, by the extent, correctness, discrimination, and accuracy of Jeffrey's information; equally so with his taste, acuteness, and wit in dissecting every book, author, and story that came in our way. Nothing could surpass the variety of his knowledge, but the easy rapidity of his manner of producing it. He was then in his meridian. Scott, delighted to draw him out, delighted also to talk himself, and displayed, I think, even a larger range of anecdote and illustration; remembering every thing, whether true or false, that was characteristic or impressive; every thing that was good, or lovely, or lively. It struck me that there was this great difference—Jeffrey, for the most part, entertained us, when books were under discussion, with the detection of faults, blunders, absurdities, or plagiarisms: Scott took up the matter where he left it, recalled some compensating beauty or excellence for which no credit had been allowed, and by the recitation, perhaps, of one fine stanza, set the poor victim on his legs again. I believe it was just about this time that Scott had abandoned his place in Mr. Jeffrey's corps. The journal had been started among the clever young society with which Edinburgh abounded when they were both entering life as barristers; and Jeffrey's principal coadjutors for some time were Sydney Smith, Brougham, Horner, Scott himself—and on scientific subjects, Playfair; but clever contributors were sought for in all quarters. Wit and fun were the first desiderata, and joined with general talent and literature, carried all before them. Neutrality, or something of the kind, as to party politics, seems to have been originally asserted—the plan being, as Scott understood, not to avoid such questions altogether, but to let them be handled by Whig or Tory indifferently, if only the writer could make his article captivating in point of information and good writing. But it was not long before Brougham dipped the concern deep in witty Whiggery; and it was thought at the time that some very foolish neglects on the part of Pitt had a principal share in making several of these brilliant young men decide on carrying over their weapons to the enemy's camp. Scott was a strong Tory, nay, by family recollections and poetical feelings of association, a Jacobite. Jeffrey, however, was an early friend—and thus there was a confliction of feelings on both sides. Scott, as I was told, remonstrated against the deepening Whiggery—Jeffrey alleged that he could not resist the wit. Scott offered to try his hand at a witty bit of Toryism—but the editor pleaded off, upon the danger of inconsistency. These differences first cooled—and soon dissolved their federation.—To return to our gay dinner. As the claret was taking its rounds, Jeffrey introduced some good-natured eulogy of his old supporters—Sydney Smith, Brougham, and Horner. 'Come,' says Scott, 'you can't say too much about Sydney or Brougham, but I will not admire your Horner: he always put me in mind of Obadiah's bull, who, although, as Father Shandy observed, he never produced a calf, went through his business with such a grave demeanour, that he always maintained his credit in the parish!' The fun of the illustration tempted him to this sally, I believe; but Horner's talents did not lie in humour, and his economical labours were totally uncongenial to the mind of Scott."

I shall conclude this chapter with a summary of booksellers' accounts. Marmion was first printed in a splendid quarto, price one guinea and a half. The 2000 copies of this edition were all disposed of in less than a month, when a second of 3000 copies, in 8vo, was sent to press. There followed a third and a fourth edition, each of 3000; in 1809; a fifth of 2000, early in 1810; and a sixth of 3000, in two volumes, crown 8vo, with twelve designs by Singleton, before the end of that year; a seventh of 4000, and an eighth of 5000 copies 8vo, in 1811; a ninth of 3000 in 1815; a tenth of 500, in 1820; an eleventh of 500, and a twelfth of 2000 copies, in foolscap, both in 1825. The legitimate sale in this country, therefore, down to the time of its being included in the first collective edition of his poetical works, amounted to 31,000; and the aggregate of that sale down to the period at which I am writing (May 1836), may be stated at 50,000 copies. I presume it is right for me to facilitate the task of future historians of our literature by preserving these details as often as I can. Such particulars respecting many of the great works even of the last century, are already sought for with vain regret; and I anticipate no day when the student of English civilization will pass without curiosity the contemporary reception of the Tale of Flodden Field.

CHAPTER XVII.

EDITION OF DRYDEN PUBLISHED—AND CRITICISED BY MR. HALLAM—WEBER'S ROMANCES—EDITIONS OF QUEENHOOHALL—CAPTAIN CARLETON'S MEMOIRS—THE MEMOIRS OF ROBERT CARY, EARL OF MONMOUTH—THE SADLER PAPERS—AND THE SOMERS' TRACTS—EDITION OF SWIFT BEGUN—LETTERS TO JOANNA BAILLIE AND GEORGE ELLIS ON THE AFFAIRS OF THE PENINSULA—JOHN STRUTHERS—JAMES HOGG—VISIT OF MR. MORRITT—MR. MORRITT'S REMINISCENCES OF ASHESTIEL—SCOTT'S DOMESTIC LIFE. —1808.

Before Marmion was published, a heavy task, begun earlier than the poem and continued throughout its progress, had been nearly completed; and there appeared in the last week of April, 1808, "The Works of John Dryden, now first collected; illustrated with notes historical, critical, and explanatory, and a Life of the Author.—By Walter Scott, Esq. Eighteen volumes, 8vo." This was the bold speculation of William Miller of Albemarle Street, London; and the editor's fee, at forty guineas the volume, was £756. The bulk of the collection, the neglect into which a majority of the pieces included in it had fallen, the obsoleteness of the party politics which had so largely exercised the author's pen, and the indecorum, not seldom running into flagrant indecency, by which transcendant genius had ministered to the appetites of a licentious age, all combined to make the warmest of Scott's friends and admirers doubt whether even his skill and reputation would be found sufficient to ensure the success of this undertaking. It was, however, better received than any one, except perhaps the courageous bookseller himself, had anticipated. The entire work was reprinted in 1821; and more lately the Life of Dryden has been twice republished in collective editions of Scott's prose miscellanies; nor, perhaps, does that class of his writings include any piece of considerable extent that has, on the whole, obtained higher estimation.

This edition of Dryden was criticised in the Edinburgh Review for October, 1808, with great ability, and, on the whole, with admirable candour. The industry and perspicacity with which Scott had carried through his editorial researches and annotations were acknowledged in terms which, had he known the name of his reviewer, must have been doubly gratifying to his feelings; and it was confessed that, in the life of his author, he had corrected with patient honesty, and filled up with lucid and expansive detail, the sometimes careless and often naked outline of Johnson's masterly Essay on the same subject. It would be superfluous to quote in this place a specimen of critical skill which has already enjoyed such wide circulation, and which will hereafter, no doubt, be included in the miscellaneous prose works of Hallam. The points of political faith on which that great writer dissents from the editor of Dryden, would, even if I had the inclination to pursue such a discussion, lead me far astray from the immediate object of these pages; they embrace questions on which the best and wisest of our countrymen will probably continue to take opposite sides, as long as our past history excites a living interest, and our literature is that of an active nation. On the poetical character of Dryden I think the editor and his critic will be found to have expressed substantially much the same judgment; when they appear to differ, the battle strikes me as being about words rather than things, as is likely to be the case when men of such abilities and attainments approach a subject remote from their personal passions. As might have been expected, the terse and dexterous reviewer has often the better in this logomachy; but when the balance is struck, we discover here, as elsewhere, that Scott's broad and masculine understanding had, by whatever happy hardihood, grasped the very result to which others win their way by the more cautious processes of logical investigation. While nothing has been found easier than to attack his details, his general views on critical questions have seldom, if ever, been successfully impugned.

I wish I could believe that Scott's labours had been sufficient to recall Dryden to his rightful station, not in the opinion of those who make literature the business or chief solace of their lives—for with them he had never forfeited it—but in the general favour of the intelligent public. That such has been the case, however, the not rapid sale of two editions, aided as they were by the greatest of living names, can be no proof; nor have I observed among the numberless recent speculations of the English booksellers, a single reprint of even those tales, satires, and critical essays, not to be familiar with which would, in the last age, have been considered as disgraceful in any one making the least pretension to letters. In the hope of exciting the curiosity, at least, of some of the thousands of young persons who seem to be growing up in contented ignorance of one of the greatest of our masters, I shall transcribe what George Ellis, whose misgivings about Scott's edition, when first undertaken, had been so serious, was pleased to write some months after its completion.

"Claremont, 23d September, 1808.

"I must confess that I took up the book with some degree of trepidation, considering an edition of such a writer as on every account *periculosæ plenum opus aleæ*; but as soon as I became acquainted with your plan I proceeded boldly, and really feel at this moment sincerely grateful to you for much exquisite amusement. It now seems to me that your critical remarks ought to have occurred to myself. Such a passionate admirer of Dryden's fables, the noblest specimen of versification (in my mind) that is to be found in any modern language, ought to have perused his theatrical pieces with more candour than I did, and to have attributed to the bad taste of the age, rather than to his own, the numerous defects by which those hasty compositions are certainly deformed. I ought to have considered that whatever Dryden wrote must, for some reason or other, be worth reading; that his bombast and his indelicacy, however disgusting, were not without their use to any one who took an interest in our literary history; that—in short, there are a thousand reflections which I ought to have made and never did make, and the result was that *your* Dryden was to me a perfectly new book. It is certainly painful to see a race-horse in a hackney-chaise, but when one considers that he will suffer infinitely less from the violent exertion to which he is condemned, than a creature of inferior race—and that the wretched cock-tail on whom the same task is usually imposed, must shortly become a martyr in the service, one's conscience becomes more at ease, and we are enabled to enjoy Dr. Johnson's favourite pleasure of rapid motion without much remorse on the score of its cruelty. Since, then, your hackneyman is not furnished with a whip, and you can so easily canter from post to post, go on and prosper!"

To return for a moment to Scott's Biography of Dryden—the only life of a great poet which he has left us, and also his only detailed work on the personal fortunes of one to whom literature was a profession—it was penned just when he had begun to apprehend his own destiny. On this point of view, forbidden to contemporary delicacy, we may now pause with blameless curiosity; and if I be not mistaken, it will reward our attention. Seriously as he must have in those days been revolving the hazards of literary enterprise, he could not, it is probable, have handled any subject of this class without letting out here and there thoughts and feelings proper to his own biographer's province; but, widely as he and his predecessor may appear to stand apart as regards some of the most important both of intellectual and moral characteristics, they had nevertheless many features of resemblance, both as men and as authors; and I doubt if the entire range of our annals could have furnished a theme more calculated to keep Scott's scrutinizing interest awake, than that which opened on him as he contemplated step by step the career of Dryden.

There are grave lessons which that story was not needed to enforce upon his mind; he required no such beacon to make him revolt from paltering with the dignity of woman, or the passions of youth, or insulting by splenetic levities the religious convictions of any portion of his countrymen. But Dryden's prostitution of his genius to the petty bitternesses of political warfare, and the consequences both as to the party he served, and the antagonists he provoked, might well supply matter for serious consideration to the author of the Melville song. "Where," says Scott, "is the expert swordsman that does not delight in the flourish of his weapon? and a brave man will least of all withdraw himself from his ancient standard when the tide of battle beats against it." But he says also,—and I know enough of his own then recent experiences, in his intercourse with some who had been among his earliest and dearest associates, not to apply the language to the circumstances that suggested it—"He who keenly engages in political controversy, must not only encounter the vulgar abuse which he may justly contemn, but the altered eye of friends whose regard is chilled;" nor when he adds, that "the protecting zeal of his party did not compensate Dryden for the loss of those whom he alienated in their service," can I help connecting this reflection too with his own subsequent abstinence from party personalities, in which, had the expert swordsman's delight in the flourish of his weapon prevailed, he might have rivalled the success of either Dryden or Swift, to be repaid like them by the settled rancour of Whigs, and the jealous ingratitude of Tories.

It is curious enough to compare the hesitating style of his apology for that tinge of evanescent superstition which seems to have clouded occasionally Dryden's bright and solid mind, with the open avowal that he has "pride in recording his author's decided admiration of old ballads and popular tales;" and perhaps his personal feelings were hardly less his prompter where he dismisses with brief scorn the sins of negligence and haste, which had been so often urged against Dryden. "Nothing," he says, "is so easily attained as the power of presenting the extrinsic qualities of fine painting, fine music, or fine poetry;

the beauty of colour and outline, the combination of notes, the melody of versification, may be imitated by artists of mediocrity; and many will view, hear, or peruse their performances, without being able positively to discover why they should not, since composed according to all the rules, afford pleasure equal to those of Raphael, Handel, or Dryden. The deficiency lies in the vivifying spirit which, like *alcohol*, may be reduced to the same principle in all the fine arts. The French are said to possess the best possible rules for building ships of war, although not equally remarkable for their power of fighting them. When criticism becomes a pursuit separate from poetry, those who follow it are apt to forget that the legitimate ends of the art for which they lay down rules, are instruction and delight, and that these points being attained, by what road soever, entitles a poet to claim the prize of successful merit. Neither did the learned authors of these disquisitions sufficiently attend to the general disposition of mankind, which cannot be contented even with the happiest imitations of former excellence, but demands novelty as a necessary ingredient for amusement. To insist that every epic poem shall have the plan of the Iliad, and every tragedy be modelled by the rules of Aristotle, resembles the principle of the architect who should build all his houses with the same number of windows and of stories. It happened, too, inevitably, that the critics, in the plenipotential authority which they exercised, often assumed as indispensable requisites of the drama, or epopeia, circumstances which, in the great authorities they quoted, were altogether accidental or indifferent. These they erected into laws, and handed down as essential; although the forms prescribed have often as little to do with the merit and success of the original from which they are taken, as the shape of the drinking glass with the flavour of the wine which it contains." These sentences appear, from the dates, to have been penned immediately after the biographer of Dryden (who wrote no epic) had perused the Edinburgh Review on Marmion.

I conclude with a passage, in writing which he seems to have anticipated the only serious critical charge that was ever brought against his edition of Dryden as a whole—namely, the loose and irregular way in which his own æsthetical notions are indicated, rather than expounded. "While Dryden," says Scott, "examined, discussed, admitted, or rejected the rules proposed by others, he forbore, from *prudence*, *indolence*, or *a regard for the freedom of Parnassus*, to erect himself into a legislator. His doctrines are scattered without system or pretence to it:—it is impossible to read far without finding some maxim for doing, or forbearing, which every student of poetry will do well to engrave upon the tablets of his memory; but the author's mode of instruction is neither harsh nor dictatorial."

On the whole it is impossible to doubt that the success of Dryden in rapidly reaching, and, till the end of a long life, holding undisputed, the summit of public favour and reputation, in spite of his "brave neglect" of minute finishing, narrow laws, and prejudiced authorities, must have had a powerful effect in nerving Scott's hope and resolution for the wide ocean of literary enterprise into which he had now fairly launched his bark. Like Dryden, he felt himself to be "amply stored with acquired knowledge, much of it the fruits of early reading and application;" anticipated that, though "while engaged in the hurry of composition, or overcome by the lassitude of continued literary labour," he should sometimes "draw with too much liberality on a tenacious memory," no "occasional imperfections would deprive him of his praise;" in short, made up his mind that "pointed and nicely-turned lines, sedulous study, and long and repeated correction and revision," would all be dispensed with, provided their place were supplied, as in Dryden, by "rapidity of conception, a readiness of expressing every idea, without losing any thing by the way," "perpetual animation and elasticity of thought;" and language "never laboured, never loitering, never (in Dryden's own phrase) *cursedly confined.*"

Scott's correspondence, about the time when his Dryden was published, is a good deal occupied with a wild project of his friend Henry Weber—that of an extensive edition of our Ancient Metrical Romances, for which, in their own original dimensions, the enthusiastic German supposed the public appetite to have been set on edge by the "Specimens" of Ellis, and imperfectly gratified by the text of Sir Tristrem. Scott assured him that Ellis's work had been popular, rather in spite than by reason of the antique verses introduced here and there among his witty and sparkling prose; while Ellis told him, with equal truth, that the Tristrem had gone through two editions, simply owing to the celebrity of its editor's name; and that, of a hundred that had purchased the book, ninety-nine had read only the preface and notes, but not one syllable of True Thomas's "quaint Inglis." Weber, in reply to Ellis, alleged that Scott had not had leisure to consider his plan so fully as it deserved; that nothing could prevent its success, provided Scott would write a preliminary essay, and let his name appear in the title-page, along with his own; and though Scott wholly declined this last proposal, he persisted for some months in a negotiation with the London booksellers, which ended as both his patrons had foreseen.

"But how is this?—(Ellis writes)—"Weber tells me he is afraid Mr. Scott will not be able to do any thing for the recommendation of his *Romances*, because he is himself engaged in no less than five different literary enterprises, some of them of immense extent. Five? Why, no combination of bone and blood can possibly stand this; and Sir John Sinclair, however successful in pointing out the best modes of feeding common gladiators, has not discovered the means of training minds to such endless fatigue. I dare not ask you for an account of these projects, nor even for a letter during the continuance of this seven years' apprenticeship, and only request that you will, after the completion of your labours, take measures to lay my ghost, which will infallibly be walking before that time, and suffering all the pains of unsatisfied curiosity. Seriously, I don't quite like your imposing on yourself such a series of tasks. Some *one* is, I believe, always of service—because, whatever you write at the same time *con amore*, comes in as a relaxation, and is likely to receive more spirit and gaiety from that circumstance; besides which, every species of study perhaps is capable of furnishing allusions, and adding vigour and solidity to poetry. Too constant attention to what they call their art, and too much solicitude about its minutiæ, has been, I think, the fault of every poet since Pope; perhaps it was his too—perhaps the frequent and varied studies imposed upon him by his necessities contributed, in some measure, to Dryden's characteristic splendour of style. Yet, surely, the best poet of the age ought not to be incessantly employed in the drudgeries of literature. I shall lament if you are effectually distracted from the exercise of the talent in which you are confessedly without a rival."

The poet answers as follows:—

> "My giving my name to Weber's Romances is out of the question, as assuredly I have not time to do any thing that can entitle it to stand in his title-page; but I will do all I can for him in the business. By the by, I wish he would be either more chary in his communications on the subject of my employments, or more accurate. I often employ his assistance in making extracts, &c., and I may say to him, as Lord Ogleby does to Canton, that he never sees me *badiner* a little with a subject, but he suspects mischief—to wit, an edition. In the mean time, suffice it to say, that I have done with poetry for some time—it is a scourging crop, and ought not to be hastily repeated. Editing, therefore, may be considered as a green crop of turnips or peas, extremely useful for those whose circumstances do not admit of giving their farm a summer fallow. Swift is my *grande opus* at present, though I am under engagements, of old standing, to write a life of Thomson from some original materials. I have completed an edition of some State Papers of Sir Ralph Sadler, which I believe you will find curious; I have, moreover, arranged for republication the more early volumes of Somers' Tracts; but these are neither toilsome nor exhausting labours. Swift, in fact, is my only task of great importance. My present official employment leaves my time very much my own, even while the courts are sitting—and entirely so in the vacation. My health is strong, and my mind active; I will therefore do as much as I can with justice to the tasks I have undertaken, and rest when advanced age and more independent circumstances entitle me to repose."

This letter is dated Ashestiel, October 8, 1808; but it carries us back to the month of April, when the Dryden was completed. His engagements with London publishers respecting the Somers and the Sadler, were, I believe, entered into before the end of 1807; but Constable appears to have first ascertained them, when he accompanied the second cargo of Marmion to the great southern market; and, alarmed at the prospect of losing his hold on Scott's industry, he at once invited him to follow up his Dryden by an edition of Swift on the same scale,—offering, moreover, to double the rate of payment which he had contracted for with the London publisher of the Dryden; that is to say, to give him £1500 for the new undertaking. This munificent tender was accepted without hesitation; and as early as May, I find Scott writing to his literary allies in all directions for books, pamphlets, and MSS. materials likely to be serviceable in completing and illustrating the Life and Works of the Dean of St. Patrick's. While these were accumulating about him, which they soon did in greater abundance than he had anticipated, he concluded his labours on Sadler's State Papers, characteristically undervalued in his letter to Ellis, and kept pace, at the same time, with Ballantyne, as the huge collection of the Somers' Tracts continued to move through the press. The Sadler was published in the course of 1809, in three large volumes, quarto; but the last of the thirteen equally ponderous tomes to which Somers extended, was not dismissed from his desk until towards the conclusion of 1812.

But these were not his only tasks during the summer and autumn of 1808; and if he had not "*five* different enterprises" on his hands when Weber said so to Ellis, he had more than five very soon after. He edited this year, Strutt's unfinished romance of Queenhoo-Hall, and equipped the fourth volume with a conclusion in the fashion of the original;[*] but how little he thought of this matter may be guessed fro one of his notes to Ballantyne, in which he says, "I wish you would see how far the copy of Queenhoo-Hall, sent last night, extends, that I may not write more nonsense than enough." The publisher of this work was John Murray, of London. It was immediately preceded by a reprint of Captain Carleton's Memoirs of the War of the Spanish Succession, to which he gave a lively preface and various notes; and followed by a similar edition of the Memoirs of Robert Cary, Earl of Monmouth,—each of these being a single octavo, printed by Ballantyne and published by Constable.

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[*] See General Preface to Waverley, pp. xiv–xvii. and Appendix No. II. p. lxv.

The republication of Carleton,* Johnson's eulogy of which fills a pleasant page in Boswell, had probably been suggested by the lively interest which Scott took in the first outburst of Spanish patriotism consequent on Napoleon's transactions at Bayonne. There is one passage in the preface which I must indulge myself by transcribing. Speaking of the absurd recall of Peterborough, from the command in which he had exhibited such a wonderful combination of patience and prudence with military daring, he says:—"One ostensible reason was, that Peterborough's parts were of too lively and mercurial a quality, and that his letters showed more wit than became a General;—a commonplace objection, raised by the dull malignity of commonplace minds, against those whom they see discharging with ease and indifference the tasks which they themselves execute (if at all) with the sweat of their brow and in the heaviness of their hearts. There is a certain hypocrisy in business, whether civil or military, as well as in religion, which they will do well to observe who, not satisfied with discharging their duty, desire also the good repute of men." It was not long before some of the dull malignants of the Parliament House began to insinuate what at length found a dull and dignified mouthpiece in the House of Commons—that if a Clerk of Session had any real business to do, it could not be done well by a man who found time for more literary enterprises than any other author of the age undertook—"wrote more books," Lord Archibald Hamilton serenely added, "than any body could find leisure to read"—and, moreover, mingled in general society as much as many that had no pursuit but pleasure.

The eager struggling of the different booksellers to engage Scott at this time, is a very amusing feature in the voluminous correspondence before me. Had he possessed treble the energy for which it was possible to give any man credit, he could never have encountered a tithe of the projects that the post brought day after day to him, announced with extravagant enthusiasm, and urged with all the arts of conciliation. I shall mention only one out of at least a dozen gigantic schemes which were thus proposed before he had well settled himself to his Swift; and I do so, because something of the kind was a few years later carried into execution. This was a General Edition of British Novels, beginning with De Foe and reaching to the end of the last century; to be set forth with biographical prefaces and illustrative notes by Scott, and printed of course by Ballantyne. The projector was

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* I believe it is now pretty generally believed that Carleton's Memoirs were among the numberless fabrications of Defoe; but in this case, as in that of his *Cavalier*, he no doubt had before him the rude journal of some officer who had really served in the campaigns described with such an inimitable air of truth.

Murray, who was now eager to start on all points in the race with Constable; but this was not, as we shall see presently, the only business that prompted my enterprising friend's first visit to Ashestiel.

Conversing with Scott, many years afterwards, about the tumult of engagements in which he was thus involved, he said, "Ay, it was enough to tear me to pieces, but there was a wonderful exhilaration about it all: my blood was kept at fever-pitch—I felt as if could have grappled with any thing and every thing; then, there was hardly one of all my schemes that did not afford me the means of serving some poor devil of a brother author. There were always huge piles of materials to be arranged, sifted, and indexed—volumes of extracts to be transcribed—journeys to be made hither and thither, for ascertaining little facts and dates,—in short, I could commonly keep half-a-dozen of the ragged regiment of Parnassus in tolerable case." I said he must have felt something like what a locomotive engine on a railway might be supposed to do, when a score of coal wagons are seen linking themselves to it the moment it gets the steam up, and it rushes on its course regardless of the burden. "Yes," said he, laughing, and making a crashing cut with his axe (for we were felling larches); but there was a cursed lot of dung-carts too." He was seldom, in fact, without some of these appendages; and I admired nothing in him more than the patient courtesy, the unwearied gentle kindness with which he always treated them, in spite of their delays and blunders, to say nothing of the almost incredible vanity and presumption which more than one of them often exhibited in the midst of their fawning; and I believe, with all their faults, the worst and weakest of them repaid him by a canine fidelity of affection. This part of Scott's character recalls by far the most pleasing trait in that of his last predecessor in the plenitude of literary authority—Dr. Johnson. There was perhaps nothing (except the one great blunder) that had a worse effect on the course of his pecuniary fortunes, than the readiness with which he exerted his interest with the booksellers on behalf of inferior writers. Even from the commencement of his connexion with Constable in particular, I can trace a continual series of such applications. They stimulated the already too sanguine publisher to numberless risks; and when these failed, the result was, in one shape or other, some corresponding deduction from the fair profits of his own literary labour. "I like well," Constable was often heard to say in the sequel, "I like well Scott's *ain bairns*—but heaven preserve me from those of his fathering!"

Every now and then, however, he had the rich compensation of finding that his interference had really promoted the worldly interests of some meritorious obscure. Early in 1808 he tasted this pleasure, in the case of a poetical shoemaker of Glasgow, Mr. John Struthers, a man of rare worth and very considerable genius, whose "Poor Man's Sabbath" was recommended to his notice by Joanna Baillie, and shortly after published, at his desire, by Mr. Constable. He thus writes to Miss Baillie from Ashestiel, on the 9th of May, 1808:—

"Your letter found me in this quiet corner, and while it always gives me pride and pleasure to hear from you, I am truly concerned at Constable's unaccountable delays. I suppose that, in the hurry of his departure for London, his promise to write to Mr. Struthers had escaped; as for any desire to quit his bargain, it is out of the question. If Mr. Struthers will send to my house in Castle Street, the manuscript designed for the press, I will get him a short bill for the copy-money the moment Constable returns, or perhaps before he comes down. He may rely on the bargain being definitively settled, and the printing will, I suppose, be begun immediately on the great bibliopolist's return; on which occasion I shall have, according to good old phrase, 'a crow to pluck with him, and a pock to put the feathers in.' I heartily wish we could have had the honour to see Miss Agnes and you at our little farm, which is now in its glory—all the twigs bursting into leaf, and all the lambs skipping on the hills. I have been fishing almost from morning till night; and Mrs. Scott, and two ladies our guests, are wandering about on the banks in the most Arcadian fashion in the world. We are just on the point of setting out on a pilgrimage to the 'bonny bush aboon Traquhair,' which I believe will occupy us all the morning. Adieu, my dear Miss Baillie. Nothing will give me more pleasure than to hear that you have found the northern breezes fraught with inspiration. You are not entitled to spare yourself, and none is so deeply interested in your labours as your truly respectful friend and admirer,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S. We quit our quiet pastures to return to Edinburgh on the 10th. So Mr. Struthers' parcel will find me there, if he is pleased to intrust me with the care of it."

Mr. Struthers' volume was unfortunate in bearing a title so very like that of James Grahame's Sabbath, which, though not written sooner, had been published a year or two before. This much interfered with its success, yet it was not on the whole unsuccessful: it put some £30 or £40 into the pocket of a good man, to whom this was a considerable supply; but it made his name and character known, and thus served him far more essentially; for he wisely continued to cultivate his poetical talents without neglecting the opportunity, thus afforded him through them, of pursuing his original calling under better advantages. It is said that the solitary and meditative generation of cobblers have produced a larger list of murders and other domestic crimes than any other mechanical trade, except the butchers; but the sons of Crispin have, to balance their account, a not less disproportionate catalogue of poets; and foremost among these stands the pious author of the Poor Man's Sabbath; one of the very few that have had sense and fortitude to resist the innumerable temptations to which any measure of celebrity exposes persons of their class. I believe Mr. Struthers still survives to enjoy the retrospect of a long and virtuous life. His letters to Scott are equally creditable to his taste and his feelings, and sometime after we shall find him making a pilgrimage of gratitude to Ashestiel.*

James Hogg was by this time beginning to be generally known and appreciated in Scotland; and the popularity of his "Mountain Bard" encouraged Scott to more strenuous intercession in his behalf. I have before me a long array of letters on this subject, which passed between Scott and the Earl of Dalkeith and his brother Lord Montagu, in 1808. Hogg's prime ambition at this period was to procure an ensigncy in a militia regiment, and he seems to have set little by Scott's representations that the pay of such a situation was very small, and that, if he obtained it, he would probably find his relations with his brother officers far from agreeable. There was, however, another objection which Scott could not hint to the aspirant himself, but which seems to have been duly considered by those who were anxious to promote his views. Militia officers of that day were by no means unlikely to see their nerves put to the test; and the Shepherd's—though he wrote some capital war-songs, especially *Donald Macdonald*—were not heroically strung. This was in truth no secret among his early intimates, though he had not measured himself at all exactly on that score, and was even tempted, when he found there was no chance of the militia epaulette, to threaten that he would "list for a soldier" in a marching regiment. Notwithstanding at least one melancholy precedent, the excise, which would have suited him almost as badly as "hugging Brown Bess," was next thought of; and the Shepherd himself seems to have entered into that plan with considerable alacrity: but I know not whether he changed his mind, or what other cause prevented such an appointment from taking place. After various shiftings he at last obtained, as we shall see, from the late Duke of Buccleuch's munificence, the gratuitous life-rent of a small farm in the vale of Yarrow; and had he contented himself with the careful management of its fields, the rest of his days might have been easy. But he could not withstand the attractions of Edinburgh, which carried him away from Altrive for months every year; and when at home, a warm and hospitable disposition, so often stirred by vanity less pardonable than his, made him convert his cottage into an unpaid hostelrie for the reception of endless troops of thoughtless admirers; and thus, in spite of much help and much forbearance, he was never out of one set of pecuniary difficulties before he had begun to weave the meshes of some fresh entanglement. *In pace requiescat.* There will never be such an Ettrick Shepherd again.

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* I am happy to learn, as this page passes through the press, from my friend Mr. John Kerr of Glasgow, that about three years ago Mr. Struthers was appointed keeper of Stirling's Library, a collection of some consequence, in that city. The selection of him for this respectable situation reflects honour on the directors of the institution.—(December, 1836).

The following is an extract from a letter of Scott's to his brother Thomas, dated 20th June, 1808.

> "Excellent news to-day from Spain—yet I wish the patriots had a leader of genius and influence. I fear the Castilian nobility are more sunk than the common people, and that it will be easier to find armies than generals. A Wallace, Dundee, or Montrose, would be the man for Spain at this moment. It is, however, a consolation that, though the grandees of the earth, when the post of honour becomes the post of danger, may be less ambitious of occupying it, there may be some hidalgo among the mountains of Asturias with all the spirit of the Cid Ruy Diaz, or Don Pelayo, or Don Quixote if you will, whose gallantry was only impeachable from the objects on which he exercised it. It strikes me as very singular to have all the places mentioned in Don Quixote and Gil Blas now the scenes of real and important events. Gazettes dated from Oviedo, and gorges fortified in the Sierra Morena, sounds like history in the land of romance.
>
> "James Hogg has driven his pigs to a bad market. I am endeavouring, as a *pis aller*, to have him made an Excise officer, that station being, with respect to Scottish geniuses, the grave of all the Capulets. Witness Adam Smith, Burns, &c."

I mentioned the name of Joanna Baillie (for "who," as Scott says in a letter of this time, "ever speaks of Miss Sappho?") in connexion with the MS. of the Poor Man's Sabbath. From Glasgow, where she had found out Struthers in April, she proceeded to Edinburgh, and took up her abode for a week or two under Scott's roof. Their acquaintance was thus knit into a deep and respectful affection on both sides; and henceforth they maintained a close epistolary correspondence, which will, I think, supply this compilation with some of the most interesting of its materials. But within a few weeks after Joanna's departure, he was to commence another intimacy not less sincere and cordial; and when I name Mr. Morritt of Rokeby, I have done enough to prepare many of my readers to expect not inferior gratification from the still more abundant series of letters in which, from this time to the end of his life, Scott communicated his thoughts and feelings to one of the most accomplished men that ever shared his confidence. He had now reached a period of life after which real friendships are but seldom formed; and it is fortunate that another English one had been thoroughly compacted before death cut the ties between him and George Ellis—because his dearest intimates within Scotland had of course but a slender part in his written correspondence.

Several mutual friends had written to recommend Mr. Morritt to his acquaintance—among others, Mr. W. S. Rose and Lady Louisa Stuart. His answer to her ladyship I must insert here, for the sake of the late inimitable Lydia White, who so long ruled without a rival in the soft realm of *blue* Mayfair.

"Edinburgh, 10th June, 1808.

"My dear Lady Louisa,

"Nothing will give us more pleasure than to have the honour of showing every attention in our power to Mr. and Mrs. Morritt, and I am particularly happy in a circumstance that at once promises me a great deal of pleasure in the acquaintance of your Ladyship's friends, and affords me the satisfaction of hearing from you again. Pray don't triumph over me too much in the case of Lydia. I stood a very respectable siege; but she caressed my wife, coaxed my children, and made, by dint of cake and pudding, some impression even upon the affections of my favourite dog:—so, when all the outworks were carried, the mere fortress had no choice but to surrender on honourable terms. To the best of my thinking, notwithstanding the cerulean hue of her stockings, and a most plentiful stock of eccentric affectation, she is really at bottom a good-natured woman, with much liveliness and some talent. She is now set out to the Highlands, where she is likely to encounter many adventures. Mrs. Scott and I went as far as Loch Catrine with her, from which jaunt I have just returned. We had most heavenly weather, which was peculiarly favourable to my fair companions' zeal for sketching every object that fell in their way, from a castle to a pigeon-house. Did your Ladyship ever travel with a *drawing* companion? Mine drew like cart-horses, as well in laborious zeal as in effect; for, after all, I could not help hinting that the cataracts delineated bore a singular resemblance to haycocks, and the rocks much correspondence to large old-fashioned cabinets with their folding-doors open. So much for Lydia, whom I left on her journey through the Highlands, but by what route she had not resolved. I gave her three plans, and think it likely she will adopt none of them: moreover, when the executive government of postilions, landlords, and Highland boatmen devolves upon her English servant instead of me, I am afraid the distresses of the errant damsel will fall a little beneath the dignity of romances. All this nonsense is *entre nous*, for Miss White has been actively zealous in getting me some Irish correspondence about Swift, and otherwise very obliging.

"It is not with my inclination that I fag for the booksellers; but what can I do? My poverty and not my will consents. The income of my office is only reversionary, and my private fortune much limited. My poetical success fairly destroyed my prospects of professional success, and obliged me to retire from the bar; for though I had a competent share of information and industry, who would trust their cause to the author of the Lay of the Last Minstrel? Now, although I do allow

that an author should take care of his literary character, yet I think the least thing that his literary character can do in return is to take some care of the author, who is unfortunately, like Jeremy in *Love for Love*, furnished with a set of tastes and appetites which would do honour to the income of a Duke if he had it. Besides, I go to work with Swift *con amore;* for, like Dryden, he is an early favourite of mine. The Marmion is nearly out, and I have made one or two alterations on the third edition, with which the press is now groaning. So soon as it is, it will make the number of copies published within the space of six months amount to eight thousand,—an immense number surely, and enough to comfort the author's wounded feelings, had the claws of the reviewers been able to reach him through the *steel jack* of true Border indifference. Your Ladyship's much obliged and faithful servant,
WALTER SCOTT."

Mr. and Mrs. Morritt reached Edinburgh soon after this letter was written. Scott showed them the lions of the town and its vicinity, exactly as if he had nothing else to attend to but their gratification; and Mr. Morrit recollects with particular pleasure one long day spent in rambling along the Esk by Roslin and Hawthornden,

"Where Jonson sat in Drummond's social shade,"

down to the old haunts of Lasswade.

"When we approached that village," says the Memorandum with which Mr. Morritt favours me, "Scott, who had laid hold of my arm, turned along the road in a direction not leading to the place where the carriage was to meet us. After walking some minutes towards Edinburgh, I suggested that we were losing the scenery of the Esk, and, besides, had Dalkeith Palace yet to see. 'Yes,' said he, 'and I have been bringing you where there is little enough to be seen—only that Scotch cottage' (one by the road side, with a small garth); 'but, though not worth looking at, I could not pass it. It was our first country house when newly married, and many a contrivance we had to make it comfortable. I made a dining-table for it with my own hands. Look at these two miserable willow-trees on either side the gate into the enclosure; they are tied together at the top to be an arch, and a cross made of two sticks over them is not yet decayed. To be sure it is not much of a lion to show a stranger; but I wanted to see it again myself, for I assure you that after I had constructed it, *mamma*' (Mrs. Scott) 'and I both of us thought it so fine, we turned out to see it by moonlight, and walked backwards from it to the door, in admiration of our own magnificence and its picturesque effect. I did want to see if it was still there—so now we will look after the barouche, and make the best of our way to Dalkeith.' Such were the natural feelings that endeared the Author of Marmion and the Lay to those who 'saw him in his happier hours of social pleasure.' His person at that time may be exactly known from Raeburn's first picture, which had just been executed for his bookseller, Constable, and which was a most faithful likeness of him and his dog Camp. The literal fidelity of the portraiture, however, is its principal merit. The expression is serious and contemplative, very unlike the hilarity and vivacity then habitual to his speaking face, but quite true to what it was in the absence of such excitement. His features struck me at first as commonplace and heavy,—but they were almost always lighted up by the flashes of the mind within. This required a hand more masterly than Raeburn's; and indeed, in my own opinion, Chantrey alone has in his bust attained that, in his case, most difficult task of portraying the features faithfully, and yet giving the real and transient expression of the countenance when animated.

"We passed a week in Edinburgh, chiefly in his society and that of his friends the Mackenzies. We were so far on our way to Brahan Castle, in Ross-shire. Scott unlocked all his antiquarian lore, and supplied us with numberless *data*, such as no guide-book could have furnished, and such as his own Monkbarns might have delighted to give. It would be idle to tell how much pleasure and instruction his advice added to a tour in itself so productive of both, as well as of private friendships and intimacies, now too generally terminated by death, but never severed by caprice or disappointment. His was added to the number by our reception now in

Edinburgh, and, on our return from the Highlands, at Ashestiel—where he had made us promise to visit him, saying that the farm-house had pigeon-holes enough for such of his friends as could live, like him, on Tweed salmon and Forest mutton. There he was the cherished friend and kind neighbour of every middling Selkirkshire yeoman, just as easily as in Edinburgh he was the companion of clever youth and narrative old age in refined society. He carried us one day to Melrose Abbey or Newark—another, to course with mountain greyhounds by Yarrow braes or St. Mary's loch, repeating every ballad or legendary tale connected with the scenery—and on a third, we must all go to a farmer's *kirn*, or harvest-home, to dance with Border lasses on a barn floor, drink whisky punch, and enter with him into all the gossip and good fellowship of his neighbours, on a complete footing of unrestrained conviviality, equality, and mutual respect. His wife and happy young family were clustered round him, and the cordiality of his reception would have unbent a misanthrope.

"At this period his conversation was more equal and animated than any man's that I ever knew. It was most characterised by the extreme felicity and fun of his illustrations, drawn from the whole encyclopædia of life and nature, in a style sometimes too exuberant for written narrative, but which to him was natural and spontaneous. A hundred stories, always apposite, and often interesting the mind by strong pathos, or eminently ludicrous, were daily told, which, with many more, have since been transplanted, almost in the same language, into the Waverley novels and his other writings. These and his recitations of poetry, which can never be forgotten by those who knew him, made up the charm that his boundless memory enabled him to exert to the wonder of the gaping lovers of wonders. But equally impressive and powerful was the language of his warm heart, and equally wonderful were the conclusions of his vigorous understanding, to those who could return or appreciate either. Among a number of such recollections, I have seen many of the thoughts which then passed through his mind embodied in the delightful prefaces annexed late in life to his poetry and novels. Those on literary quarrels and literary irritability are exactly what he then expressed. Keenly enjoying literature as he did, and indulging his own love of it in perpetual composition, he always maintained the same estimate of it as subordinate and auxiliary to the purposes of life, and rather talked of men and events than of books and criticism. Literary fame, he always said, was a bright feather in the cap, but not the substantial cover of a well-protected head. This sound and manly feeling was what I have seen described by some of his biographers as *pride;* and it will always be thought so by those whose own vanity can only be gratified by the admiration of others, and who mistake shows for realities. None valued the love and applause of others more than Scott; but it was to the love and applause of those he valued in return that he restricted the feeling—without restricting the kindness. Men who did not, or would not, understand this, perpetually mistook him—and, after loading him with undesired eulogy, perhaps in his own house neglected common attention or civility to other parts of his family. It was on such an occasion that I heard him murmur in my ear, 'Author as I am, I wish these good people would recollect that I began with being a gentleman, and don't mean to give up the character.' Such was all along his feeling, and this, with a slight prejudice common to Scotchmen in favour of ancient and respectable family descent, constituted what in Grub Street is called his *pride.* It was, at least, what Johnson would have justly called *defensive* pride. From all other, and still more from mere vanity, I never knew any man so remarkably free."

The farmer at whose annual *kirn* Scott and all his household were, in those days, regular guests, was Mr. Laidlaw, the duke of Buccleuch's tenant on the lands of Peel, which are only separated from the eastern terrace of Ashestiel by the ravine and its brook. Mr. Laidlaw was himself possessed of some landed property in the same neighbourhood, and being considered as wealthy, and fond of his wealth, he was usually called among the country people *Laird Nippy;* an expressive designation which it would be difficult to translate. Though a very dry, demure, and taciturn old presbyterian, he could not resist the Sheriff's jokes, nay, he even gradually subdued his scruples so far, as to become a pretty constant attendant at his "*English printed prayers*" on the Sundays; which, indeed, were by this time rather more popular than quite suited the capacity of the parlour-chapel. Mr. Laidlaw's wife was a woman of superior mind and manners—a great reader, and one of the few to whom Scott liked lending his books; for most strict and delicate was he always in the care of them, and indeed, hardly any trivial occurrence ever seemed to touch his temper at all except any thing like irreverent treatment of a book. The intercourse between the family at Ashestiel and this worthy woman and her children, was a constant interchange of respect and kindness; but I remember to have heard Scott say that the greatest compliment he had ever received in his life was from the rigid old farmer himself; for, years after he had left Ashestiel, he discovered casually that special care had been taken to keep the turf seat on *the Shirra's knowe* in good repair: and this was much from Nippy.

And here I must set down a story which, most readers will smile to be told, was often repeated by Scott; and always with an air that seemed to me, in spite of his endeavours to the contrary, as grave as the usual aspect of Laird Nippy of the Peel. This neighbour was a distant kinsman of his dear friend William Laidlaw;—so distant, that elsewhere in that condition they would scarcely have remembered any community of blood;—but they both traced their descent, in the ninth degree, to an ancestress who, in the days of John Knox, fell into trouble from a suspicion of witchcraft. In her time the Laidlaws were rich and prosperous, and held rank among the best gentry of Tweeddale; but in some evil hour, her husband, the head of his blood, reproached her with her addiction to the black art, and she, in her anger, cursed the name and lineage of Laidlaw. Her only son, who stood by, implored her to revoke the malediction; but in vain. Next day, however, on the renewal of his entreaties, she carried him with her into the woods, made him slay a heifer, sacrificed it to the power of evil in his presence, and then, collecting the ashes in her apron, invited the youth to see her commit them to the river. "Follow them," said she, "from stream to pool, as long as they float visible, and as many streams as you shall then have passed, for so many generations shall your descendants prosper. After that they shall like the rest of the name be poor, and take their part in my curse." The streams he counted, were nine; and now, Scott would say, "look round you in this country, and sure enough the Laidlaws are one and all landless men, with the single exception of Auld Nippy!" Many times had I heard both him and William Laidlaw tell this story, before any suspicion got abroad that Nippy's wealth rested on insecure foundations. Year after year, we never escorted a stranger by the Peel, but I heard the tale;—and at last it came with a new conclusion;—"and now, think whatever we choose of it, my good friend Nippy is a bankrupt."

Mr. Morritt's mention of the "happy young family clustered round him" at Laird Nippy's *kirn*, reminds me that I ought to say a few words on Scott's method of treating his children in their early days.

He had now two boys and two girls;—and he never had more.* He was not one of those who take much delight in a mere infant; but no father ever devoted more time and tender care to his offspring than he did to each of his, as they successively reached the age when they could listen to him and understand his talk. Like their mute playmates, Camp and the greyhounds, they had at all times free access to his study; he never considered their tattle as any disturbance; they went and came as pleased their fancy; he was always ready to answer their questions: and when they, unconscious how he was engaged, entreated him to lay down his pen and tell them a story, he would take them on his knee, repeat a ballad or a legend, kiss them, and set them down again to their marbles or ninepins, and resume his labour as if refreshed by the interruption. From a very early age he made them dine at table, and "to sit up to supper" was the great reward when they had been "very good bairns." In short, he considered it as the highest duty as well as the sweetest pleasure of a parent to be the companion of his children; he partook all their little joys and sorrows, and made his kind unformal instructions to blend so easily and playfully with the current of their own sayings and doings, that so far from regarding him with any distant awe, it was never thought that any sport or diversion could go on in the right way, unless *papa* were of the party, or that the rainiest day could be dull so he were at home.

Of the irregularity of his own education he speaks with considerable regret, in the autobiographical fragment written this year at Ashestiel; yet his practice does not look as if that feeling had been strongly rooted in his mind;—for he never did show much concern about regulating systematically what is usually called education in the case of his own children. It seemed, on the contrary, as if he attached little importance to any thing else, so he could perceive that the young curiosity was excited—the intellect, by whatever springs of interest, set in motion. He detested and despised the whole generation of modern children's books, in which the attempt is made to convey accurate notions of scientific minutiæ: delighting cordially, on the other hand, in those of the preceding age, which, addressing themselves chiefly to the imagination, obtain through it, as he believed, the best chance of stirring our graver faculties also. He exercised the memory, by selecting for tasks of recitation passages of popular verse the most likely to catch the fancy of children; and gradually familiarized them with the ancient history of their own country, by arresting attention, in the course of his own oral narrations, on incidents and characters of a similar description. Nor did he neglect to use the same means of quickening curiosity as to the events of sacred history. On Sunday he never rode—at least not until his growing infirmity made his pony almost necessary to him—for it was his principle that all domestic animals have a full right to their Sabbath of rest; but after he had read the church service, he usually walked with his whole family, dogs included, to some favourite spot at a considerable distance from the house—most frequently the ruined tower of Elibank—and there dined with them in the open air on a basket of cold provisions, mixing his wine with the water of the brook beside which they all were grouped around him on the turf; and here, or at home, if the weather kept them from their ramble, his Sunday talk was just such a series of biblical lessons as that which we have preserved for the permanent use of rising generations, in his Tales of a Grandfather, on the early history of Scotland. I wish he had committed that other series to writing too;—how different that would have been from our thousand compilations of dead epitome and imbecile cant! He had his Bible, the Old Testament especially, by heart; and on these days inwove the simple pathos or sublime enthusiasm of Scripture, in whatever story he was telling, with the same picturesque richness as he did, in his week-day tales, the quaint Scotch of Pitscottie, or some rude romantic old rhyme from Barbour's Bruce or Blind Harry's Wallace.

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* I may as well transcribe here the rest of the record in Scott's family Bible. After what was quoted in a former chapter, it thus proceeds:—

"24to die Octobris 1799.—Margareta C. Scott, filiam apud Edinburgum edidit 15o Novembris 1799, in Ecclesiam Christianam recepta fuit per baptismum dicta filia, nomenque ei adjectum Charlotta Sophia, per virum reverendum Danielem Sandford; sponsoribus prænobili Arthuro Marchione de Downshire, Sophia Dumergue, et Anna Rutherford matre mea.

"Margareta C. Scott puerum edidit 28vo Octobris A. D. 1801 apud Edinburgum; nomenque ei adjectum Gualterus, cum per v. rev. Doctorem Danielem Sandford baptizatus erat.

"M. C. Scott filiam edidit apud Edinburgum 2do die Februarij 1803, quæ in Ecclesiam recepta fuit per virum reverendum Doctorem Sandford, nomenque ei adjectum Anna Scott.

"24to Decem: 1805.—M. C. Scott apud Edinburgum puerum edidit; qui baptizatus erat per virum reverendum Joannem Thomson, Ministrum de Duddingstone prope Edinburgum, nomenque Carolus illi datum."

By many external accomplishments, either in girl or boy, he set little store. He delighted to hear his daughters sing an old ditty, or one of his own framing; but, so the singer appeared to feel the spirit of her ballad, he was not at all critical of the technical execution. There was one thing, however, on which he fixed his heart hardly less than the ancient Persians of the Cyropædia; like them, next to love of truth, he held love of horsemanship for the prime point of education. As soon as his eldest girl could sit a pony, she was made the regular attendant of his mountain rides; and they all, as they attained sufficient strength, had the like advancement. He taught them to think nothing of tumbles, and habituated them to his own reckless delight in perilous fords and flooded streams; and they all imbibed in great perfection his passion for horses—as well, I may venture to add, as his deep reverence for the more important article of that Persian training. "Without courage," he said, "there cannot be truth; and without truth there can be no other virtue."

He had a horror of boarding-schools; never allowed his girls to learn any thing out of his own house; and chose their governess—(Miss Miller)—who about this time was domesticated with them, and never left them while they needed one,—with far greater regard to her kind good temper and excellent moral and religious principles, than to the measure of her attainments in what are called fashionable accomplishments. The admirable system of education for boys in Scotland combines all the advantages of public and private instruction: his carried their satchels to the High-School, when the family was in Edinburgh, just as he had done before them, and shared of course the evening society of their happy home. But he rarely, if ever, left them in town, when he could himself be in the country; and at Ashestiel he was, for better or for worse, his eldest boy's daily tutor after he began Latin.

The following letter will serve, among other things, to supply a few more details of the domestic life of Ashestiel;—

To Miss Joanna Baillie—Hampstead.

"Sept. 20, 1808.

"My dear Miss Baillie,

"The law, you know, makes the husband answerable for the debts of his wife, and therefore gives him a right to approach her creditors with an offer of payment; so that, after witnessing many fruitless and broken resolutions of my Charlotte, I am determined, rather than she and I shall appear longer insensible of your goodness, to intrude a few lines on you to answer the letter you honoured her with some time ago. The secret reason of her procrastination is, I believe, some terror of writing in English—which you know is not her native language—to one who is as much distinguished by her command of it as by the purposes she adapts it to. I wish we had the command of what my old friend Pitscottie calls 'a blink of the sun or a whip of the whirlwind,' to transport you to this solitude before the frost has stripped it of its leaves. It is not, indeed (even I must confess), equal in picturesque beauty to the banks of Clyde and Evan; but it is so sequestered, so simple, and so solitary, that it seems just to have beauty enough to delight its inhabitants, without a single attraction for any visitor, except those who come for its inhabitants' sake. And in good sooth, whenever I was tempted to envy the splendid scenery of the lakes of Westmoreland, I always endeavoured to cure my fit of spleen by recollecting that they attract as many idle, insipid, and indolent gazers as any celebrated beauty in the land, and that our scene of pastoral hills and pure streams is like Touchstone's mistress, 'a poor thing, but mine own.' I regret, however, that these celebrated beauties should have frowned, wept, or pouted upon you, when you honoured them by your visit in summer. Did Miss Agnes Baillie and you meet with any of the poetical inhabitants of that district—Wordsworth, Southey, or Coleridge? The two former would, I am sure, have been happy in paying their respects to you; with the habits and tastes of the latter I am less acquainted.

"Time has lingered with me from day to day in expectation of being called southward; I now begin to think my journey will hardly take place till winter, or early in spring. One of the most pleasant circumstances attending it will be the opportunity to pay my homage to you, and to claim withal a certain promise concerning a certain play, of which you were so kind as to promise me a reading. I hope you do not permit indolence to lay the paring of her little finger upon you; we cannot afford the interruption to your labours which even that might occasion, And 'what are *you* doing?' your politeness will perhaps lead you to say: in answer, —Why, I am very like a certain ancient King, distinguished in the Edda, who, when Lok paid him a visit,—

'Was twisting of collars his dogs to hold,
And combing the mane of his courser bold.'

If this idle man's employment required any apology, we must seek it in the difficulty of seeking food to make savoury messes for our English guests; for we are eight miles from market, and must call in all the country sports to aid the larder. We had here, two days ago, a very pleasant English family, the Morritts of Rokeby Park, in Yorkshire. The gentleman wandered over all Greece, and visited the Troad, to aid in confuting the hypothesis of old Bryant, who contended that Troy town was not taken by the Greeks. His erudition is, however, not of an overbearing kind, which was lucky for me, who am but a slender classical scholar. Charlotte's kindest and best wishes attend Miss Agnes Baillie, in which I heartily and respectfully join;—to you she offers her best apology for not writing, and hopes for your kind forgiveness. I ought perhaps to make one for taking the task off her hands, but we are both at your mercy; and I am ever your most faithful, obedient and admiring servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

"P. S. I have had a visit from the author of the Poor Man's Sabbath, whose affairs with Constable are, I hope, settled to his satisfaction. I got him a few books more than were originally stipulated, and have endeavoured to interest Lord Leven,* and through him Mr. Wilberforce, and through them both the saints in general, in the success of this modest and apparently worthy man. Lord Leven had promised his exertions; and the interest of the party, if exerted, would save a work tenfold inferior in real merit. What think you of Spain? The days of William Wallace and the Cid Ruy Diaz de Bivar seem to be reviving there."

CHAPTER XVIII.

QUARREL WITH MESSRS. CONSTABLE AND HUNTER—JOHN BALLANTYNE ESTABLISHED AS A BOOKSELLER IN EDINBURGH—SCOTT'S LITERARY PROJECTS—THE EDINBURGH ANNUAL REGISTER, &c.—MEETING OF JAMES BALLANTYNE AND JOHN MURRAY—MURRAY'S VISIT TO ASHESTIEL—POLITICS—THE PENINSULAR WAR—PROJECT OF THE QUARTERLY REVIEW—CORRESPONDENCE WITH ELLIS, GIFFORD, MORRITT, SOUTHEY, SHARPE, &c.—1808-1809.

The reader does not need to be reminded that Scott at this time had business enough on his hand besides combing the mane of Brown Adam, and twisting couples for Douglas and Percy. He was deep in Swift; and the Ballantyne press was groaning under a multitude of works, some of them already mentioned, with almost all of which his hand as well as his head had something, more or less, to do. But a serious change was about to take place in his relations with the spirited publishing house which had hitherto been the most efficient supporters of that press; and his letters begin to be much occupied with differences and disputes which, uninteresting as the details would now be, must have cost him many anxious hours in the apparently idle autumn of 1808. Mr. Constable had then for his partner Mr. Alexander Gibson Hunter, afterwards Laird of Blackness, to whose intemperate language, much more than to any part of Constable's own conduct, Scott ascribed this unfortunate alienation; which, however, as well as most of my friend's subsequent misadventures, I am inclined to trace in no small degree to the influence which a third person, hitherto unnamed, was about this time beginning to exercise over the concerns of James Ballantyne.

John Ballantyne, a younger brother of Scott's school-fellow, had been originally bred to their father's trade of a *merchant*—(that is to say, a dealer in every thing from broadcloth to children's tops)—at Kelso; but James's rise in the world was not observed by him without ambitious longings; for he too had a love, and he at least fancied that he had a talent, for literature. He left Kelso abruptly for the chances of the English metropolis. After a short residence in London, where, among other things, he officiated for a few months as clerk in a banking house, the continued intelligence of the printer's prosperity determined him to return to Scotland. Not finding any opening at the moment in Edinburgh, he again tried the shop at Kelso; but his habits had not been improved by his brief sojourn in London, and the business soon melted to nothing in his hands. His goods were disposed of by auction for the benefit of his creditors—the paternal shop was finally closed; and John again quitted his birthplace, under circumstances which, as I shall show in the sequel, had left a deep and painful trace even upon that volatile mind.

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* The late Earl of Leven had married a lady of the English family of Thornton, whose munificent charities are familiar to the readers of Cowper's Life and Letters; hence, probably, his Lordship's influence with the party alluded to in the text.

He was a quick, active, intrepid little fellow; and in society so very lively and amusing, so full of fun and merriment, such a thoroughly light-hearted droll, all-over quaintness and humorous mimicry; and, moreover, such a keen and skilful devotee to all manner of field-sports, from fox-hunting to badger-baiting inclusive, that it is no wonder he should have made a favourable impression on Scott, when he appeared in Edinburgh in this destitute plight, and offered to assist his brother in the management of a concern by which James's comparatively indolent habits were now very severely tried. The contrast between the two brothers was not the least of the amusement; indeed that continued to amuse him to the last. The elder of these is painted to the life in an early letter of Leyden's, which, on the doctor's death, he, though not (I fancy) without wincing, permitted Scott to print;—"Methinks I see you with your confounded black beard, bull-neck, and upper lip turned up to your nose, while one of your eyebrows is cocked perpendicularly, and the other forms pretty well the base of a right-angled triangle, opening your great gloating eyes, and crying—*But, Leyden!!!*" James was a short, stout, well-made man, and would have been considered a handsome one, but for these grotesque frowns, starts, and twistings of his features, set off by a certain mock majesty of walk and gesture, which he had perhaps contracted from his usual companions, the emperors and tyrants of the stage. His voice in talk was grave and sonorous, and he sung well (theatrically well), in a fine rich bass. John's tone in singing was a sharp treble—in conversation something between a croak and a squeak. Of *his* style of story-telling it is sufficient to say that the late Charles Matthews's "old Scotch lady" was but an imperfect copy of the original, which the inimitable comedian first heard in my presence from his lips. He was shorter than James, but lean as a scarecrow, and he rather hopped than walked: his features, too, were naturally good, and he twisted them about quite as much, but in a very different fashion. The elder brother was a gourmand—the younger liked his bottle and his bowl, as well as, like Johnny Armstrong, "a hawk, a hound, and a fair woman." Scott used to call the one Aldiborontiphoscophornio, the other Rigdumfunnidos. They both entertained him; they both loved and revered him; and I believe would have shed their heart's blood in his service: but they both, as men of affairs, deeply injured him—and above all, the day that brought John into pecuniary connexion with him was the blackest in his calendar. A more reckless, thoughtless, improvident adventurer never rushed into the serious responsibilities of business; but his cleverness, his vivacity, his unaffected zeal, his gay fancy always seeing the light side of every thing, his imperturbable good-humour and buoyant elasticity of spirits, made and kept him such a favourite, that I believe Scott would have as soon ordered his dog to be hanged, as harboured, in the darkest hour of perplexity, the least thought of discarding "jocund Johnny."

The great bookseller of Edinburgh was a man of calibre infinitely beyond these Ballantynes. Though with a strong dash of the sanguine, without which, indeed, there can be no great projector in any walk of life, Archibald Constable was one of the most sagacious persons that ever followed his profession. A brother poet of Scott's says to him, a year or two before this time, "Our butteraceous friend at the Cross turns out a deep draw-well;" and another eminent literator, still more closely connected with Constable, had already, I believe, christened him "The Crafty." Indeed, his fair and very handsome physiognomy carried a bland astuteness of expression, not to be mistaken by any who could read the plainest of nature's handwriting. He made no pretensions to literature—though he was in fact a tolerable judge of it generally, and particularly well skilled in the department of Scotch antiquities. He distrusted himself, however, in such matters, being conscious that his early education had been very imperfect; and moreover, he wisely considered the business of a critic as quite as much out of his "proper line" as authorship itself. But of that "proper line," and his own qualifications for it, his estimation was ample; and—often as I may have smiled at the lofty serenity of his self-complacence—I confess I now doubt whether he rated himself too highly as a master in the true science of the bookseller. He had, indeed, in his mercantile character, one deep and fatal flaw—for he hated accounts, and systematically refused, during the most vigorous years of his life, to examine or sign a balance-sheet; but for casting a keen eye over the remotest indications of popular taste—for anticipating the chances of success and failure in any given variety of adventure—for the planning and invention of his calling—he was not, in his own day at least, surpassed; and among all his myriad of undertakings, I question if any one that really originated with himself, and continued to be superintended by his own care, ever did fail. He was as bold as far-sighted—and his disposition was as liberal as his views were wide. Had he and Scott from the beginning trusted as thoroughly as they understood each other; had there been no third parties to step in, flattering an overweening vanity on the one hand into presumption, and on the other side spurring the enterprise that wanted nothing but a bridle, I have no doubt their joint career might have been one of unbroken prosperity. But the Ballantynes were jealous of the superior mind, bearing, and authority of Constable: and though he too had a liking for them both personally—esteemed James's literary tact, and was far too much of a humourist not to be very fond of the younger brother's company—he could never away with the feeling that they intervened unnecessarily, and left him but the shadow where he ought to have had the substantial lion's share of confidence. On his part, again, he was too proud a man to give entire confidence where that was withheld from himself; and more especially, I can well believe that a frankness of communication as to the real amount of his capital and general engagements of business, which would have been the reverse of painful to him in habitually confidential intercourse with Scott, was out of the question when Scott's proposals and suggestions were to be met in conference, not with his own manly simplicity, but the buckram propensity of the one, or the burlesque levity of the other of his plenipotentiaries.

The disputes in question seem to have begun very shortly after the contract for the Life and Edition of Swift had been completed; and we shall presently see reason to infer that Scott to a certain degree was influenced at the moment by a soreness originating in the recent conduct of Mr. Jeffrey's Journal—that great primary source of the wealth and authority of the house of Constable. The then comparatively little-known bookseller of London, who was destined to be ultimately Constable's most formidable rival in more than one department of publishing, has told me, that when he read the article on Marmion, and another on general politics, in the same number of the Edinburgh Review, he said to himself—"Walter Scott has feelings both as a gentleman and a Tory, which these people must now have wounded. The alliance between him and the whole clique of the Edinburgh Review, its proprietor included, is shaken;" and, as far at least as the political part of the affair was concerned, John Murray's sagacity was not at fault. We have seen with what thankful alacrity he accepted a small share in the adventure of Marmion—and with what brilliant success that was crowned; nor is it wonderful that a young bookseller, conscious of ample energies, should now have watched with eagerness the circumstances which seemed not unlikely to place within his own reach a more intimate connexion with the first great living author in whose works he had ever had any direct interest. He forthwith took measures for improving and extending his relations with James Ballantyne, through whom, as he guessed, Scott could best be approached. His tenders of employment for the Canongate press were such, that the apparent head of the firm proposed a conference at Ferrybridge, in Yorkshire; and there Murray, after detailing some of his own literary plans—particularly that already alluded to, of a Novelist's Library—in his turn sounded Ballantyne so far, as to resolve at once on pursuing his journey into Scotland. Ballantyne had said enough to satisfy him that the project of setting up a new publishing house in Edinburgh, in opposition to Constable, was already all but matured, and he, on the instant, proposed himself for its active co-operator in the metropolis. Ballantyne proceeded to open his budget further, mentioning, among other things, that the author of Marmion had "both another Scotch poem and a *Scotch novel* on the stocks;" and had, moreover, chalked out the design of an Edinburgh Annual Register, to be conducted in opposition to the politics and criticism of Constable's Review. These tidings might have been enough to make Murray proceed farther northwards; but there was a scheme of his own which had for some time deeply occupied his mind, and the last article of this communication determined him to embrace the opportunity of opening it in person at Ashestiel. He arrived there about the middle of October. The 26th Number of the Edinburgh Review, containing Mr. Brougham's celebrated article, entitled, "Don Cevallos, on the usurpation of Spain," had just been published; and one of the first things Scott mentioned in conversation was, that he had so highly resented the tone of that essay, as to give orders that his name might be discontinued on the list of subscribers.* Mr. Murray could not have wished better auspices for the matter he had come to open; and, shortly after his departure, Scott writes as follows, to his prime political confidant:—

To George Ellis, Esq., Claremont.

"Ashestiel, Nov. 2d, 1808.

"Dear Ellis,

"We had, equally to our joy and surprise, a flying visit from Heber, about three weeks ago. He staid but three days—but, between old stories and new, we made them very merry in their passage. During his stay, John Murray, the bookseller in Fleet Street, who has more real knowledge of what concerns his business than any of his brethren—at least than any of them that I know—came to canvass a most important plan, of which I am now, in 'dern privacie,' to give you the outline. I had most strongly recommended to our Lord Advocate† to think of some counter measures against the Edinburgh Review, which, politically speaking, is doing incalculable damage. I do not mean this in a mere party view;—the present ministry are not all that I could wish them—for (Canning excepted) I doubt there is among them too much *self-seeking*, as it was called in Cromwell's time; and what is their misfortune, if not their fault, there is not among them one in the decided situation of paramount authority, both with respect to the others and to the Crown, which is, I think, necessary, at least in difficult times, to produce promptitude, regularity, and efficiency in measures of importance. But their political principles are sound English principles, and, compared to the greedy and inefficient horde which preceded them, they are angels of light and of purity. It is obvious, however, that they want defenders both in and out of doors. Pitt's

——'Love and fear glued many friends to him;
And now he's fallen, those tough commixtures melt.'

Were this only to effect a change of hands, I should expect it with more indifference; but I fear a change of principles is designed. The Edinburgh Review tells you coolly, 'We foresee a speedy revolution in this country as well as Mr. Cobbett;' and, to say the truth, by degrading the person of the Sovereign—exalting the power of the French armies, and the wisdom of their counsels—holding forth that peace (which they allow can only be purchased by the humiliating prostration of our honour) is indispensable to the very existence of this country—I think, that for these two years past, they have done their utmost to hasten the accomplishment of their own prophecy. Of this work 9000 copies are printed quarterly, and no genteel family *can* pretend to be without it, because, independent of its politics, it gives the only valuable literary criticism which can be met with. Consider, of the numbers who read this work, how many are there likely to separate the literature from the politics—how many youths are there upon whose minds the flashy and bold character of the work is likely to make an indelible impression; and think what the consequence is likely to be.

"Now, I think there is balm in Gilead for all this; and that the cure lies in instituting such a Review in London as should be conducted totally independent of bookselling influence, on a plan as liberal as that of the Edinburgh, its literature as well supported, and its principles English and constitutional. Accordingly, I have been given to understand that Mr. William Gifford is willing to become the conductor of such a work, and I have written to him, at the Lord Advocate's desire, a very voluminous letter on the subject. Now, should this plan succeed, you must hang your birding-piece on its hooks, take down your old Anti-jacobin armour, and 'remember your swashing blow.' It is not that I think this projected Review ought to be exclusively or principally political—this would, in my opinion, absolutely counteract its purpose, which I think should be to offer to those who love their country, and to those whom we would wish to love it, a periodical work of criticism conducted with equal talent, but upon sounder principle than that which has gained so high a station in the world of letters. Is not this very possible? In point of learning, you Englishmen have ten times our scholarship; and as for talent and genius, 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than any of the rivers in Israel?' Have we not yourself and your cousin, the Roses, Malthus, Matthias, Gifford, Heber, and his brother? Can I not procure you a score of blue-caps who would rather write for us than for the Edinburgh Review if they got as much pay by it? 'A good plot, good friends, and full of expectation —an excellent plot, excellent friends!'

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* 'When the 26th Number appeared. Mr. Scott wrote to Constable in these terms:—"The Edinburgh Review *had* become such as to render it impossible for me to continue a contributor to it.—*Now*, it is such as I can no longer continue to receive or read it." The list of the then subscribers exhibits in an indignant dash of Constable's pen opposite Mr. Scott's name, the word—"STOPT!!!"'—*Letter from Mr. R. Cadell.*

† The Right Hon. John Campbell Colquhoun, husband of Scott's early friend, Mary Anne Erskine.

"Heber's fear was, lest we should fail in procuring regular steady contributors; but I know so much of the interior discipline of reviewing, as to have no apprehension of that. Provided we are once set a-going by a few dashing numbers, there would be no fear of enlisting regular contributors; but the amateurs must bestir themselves in the first instance. From Government we should be entitled to expect confidential communication as to points of fact (so far as fit to be made public), in our political disquisitions. With this advantage, our good cause and St. George to boot, we may at least divide the field with our formidable competitors, who, after all, are much better at cutting than parrying, and whom uninterrupted triumph has as much unfitted for resisting a serious attack, as it has done Buonaparte for the Spanish war. Jeffrey is, to be sure, a man of most uncommon versatility of talent, but what then?

'General Howe is a gallant commander,
There are others as gallant as he.'

Think of all this, and let me hear from you very soon on the subject. Canning is, I have good reason to know, very anxious about the plan. I mentioned it to Robert Dundas, who was here with his lady for two days on a pilgrimage to Melrose, and he approved highly of it. Though no literary man, he is judicious, *clair-voyant*, and uncommonly sound-headed, like his father, Lord Melville. With the exceptions I have mentioned, the thing continues a secret.

"I am truly happy you think well of the Spanish business: they have begun in a truly manly and rounded manner, and barring internal dissension, are, I think, very likely to make their part good. Buonaparte's army has come to assume such a very motley description as gives good hope of its crumbling down on the frost of adversity setting in. The Germans and Italians have deserted him in troops, and I greatly doubt his being able to assemble a very huge force at the foot of the Pyrenees, unless he trusts that the terror of his name will be sufficient to keep Germany in subjugation, and Austria in awe. The finances of your old Russian friends are said to be ruined out and out; such is the account we have from Leith.

"Enough of this talk. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The readiness with which Mr. Ellis entered into the scheme thus introduced to his notice, encouraged Scott to write still more fully; indeed, I might fill half a volume with the correspondence now before me concerning the gradual organization and ultimately successful establishment of the Quarterly Review. But my only object is to illustrate the liberality and sagacity of Scott's views on such a subject, and the characteristic mixture of strong and playful language in which he developed them; and I conceive that this end will be sufficiently accomplished by extracting two more letters of this bulky series. Already, as we have seen, before opening the matter even to Ellis, he had been requested to communicate his sentiments to the proposed editor of the work, and he had done so in these terms:—

To William Gifford, Esq., London.

"Edinburgh, October 25, 1808.

"Sir,

"By a letter from the Lord Advocate of Scotland, in consequence of a communication between his Lordship and Mr. Canning on the subject of a new Review to be attempted in London, I have the pleasure to understand that you have consented to become the editor, a point which, in my opinion, goes no small way to ensure success to the undertaking. In offering a few observations upon the details of such a plan, I only obey the commands of our distinguished friends, without having the vanity to hope that I can point out any thing which was not likely to have at once occurred to a person of Mr. Gifford's literary experience and eminence. I shall, however, beg permission to offer you my sentiments, in the miscellaneous way in which they occur to me. The extensive reputation and circulation of the Edinburgh Review is chiefly owing to two circumstances: First, that it is entirely uninfluenced by the booksellers, who have contrived to make most of the other Reviews merely advertising sheets to puff off their own publications; and, secondly, the very handsome recompense which the editor not only holds forth to his regular assistants, but actually forces upon those whose circumstances and rank make it a matter of total indifference to them. The editor, to my knowledge, makes a point of every contributor receiving this *bonus*, saying, that Czar Peter, when working in the trenches, received pay as a common soldier. This general rule removes all scruples of delicacy, and fixes in his service a number of persons who might otherwise have felt shy in taking the price of their labours, and even the more so because it was an object of convenience to them. There are many young men of talent and enterprise who are extremely glad of a handsome apology to work for fifteen or twenty guineas, although they would not willingly be considered as hired reviewers. From this I deduce two points of doctrine: first, that the work must be considered as independent of all bookselling influence; secondly, that the labours of the contributors must be regularly and handsomely recompensed, and that it must be a rule that each one shall accept of the price of his labour. John Murray of Fleet Street, a young bookseller of capital and enterprise, and with more good sense and propriety of sentiment than fall to the share of most of the trade, made me a visit at Ashestiel a few weeks ago, and as I found he had had some communication with you upon the subject, I did not hesitate to communicate my sentiments to him on these and some other points of the plan, and I thought his ideas were most liberal and satisfactory.

"The office of the editor is of such importance, that had you not been pleased to undertake it, I fear the plan would have fallen wholly to the ground. The full power of control must, of course, be vested in the editor for selecting, curtailing, and correcting the contributions to the Review. But this is not all; for, as he is the person immediately responsible to the bookseller that the work (amounting to a certain number of pages, more or less) shall be before the public at a certain time, it will be the editor's duty to consider in due time the articles of which each number ought to consist, and to take measures for procuring them from the persons best qualified to write upon such and such subjects. But this is sometimes so troublesome, that I foresee with pleasure you will be soon obliged to abandon your resolution of writing nothing yourself. At the same time, if you will accept of my services as a sort of jackal or lion's provider, I will do all in my power to assist in this troublesome department of editorial duty. But there is still something behind, and that of the last consequence. One great resource to which the Edinburgh editor turns himself, and by which he gives popularity even to the duller articles of his Review, is accepting contributions from persons of inferior powers of writing, provided he understand the books to which the criticisms relate; and as such are often of stupifying mediocrity, he renders them palatable by throwing in a handful of spice—namely, any lively paragraph or entertaining illustration that occurs to him in reading them over. By this sort of veneering, he converts, without loss of time, or hinderance of business, articles which, in their original state, might hang in the market, into such goods as are not likely to disgrace those among which they are placed. This seems to be a point in which an editor's assistance is of the last consequence, for those who possess the knowledge necessary to review books of research or abstruse disquisition, are very often unable to put the criticism into a readable, much more a pleasant and captivating form; and as their science cannot be attained 'for the nonce,' the only remedy is to supply their deficiencies, and give their lucubrations a more popular turn.

"There is one opportunity possessed by you in a particular degree—that of access to the best sources of political information. It would not, certainly, be advisable that the work should assume, especially at the outset, a professed political character. On the contrary, the articles on science and miscellaneous literature ought to be of such a quality as might fairly challenge competition with the best of our contemporaries. But as the real reason of instituting the publication is the disgusting and deleterious doctrine with which the most popular of our Reviews disgraces its pages, it is essential to consider how this warfare should be managed. On this ground, I hope it is not too much to expect from those who have the power of assisting us, that they should on topics of great national interest furnish the reviewers, through the medium of their editor, with accurate views of points of fact, so far as they are fit to be made public. This is the most delicate, and yet most essential part of our scheme. On the one hand, it is certainly not to be understood that we are to be held down to advocate upon all occasions the cause of administration. Such a dereliction of independence would render us entirely useless for the purpose we mean to serve. On the other hand, nothing will render the work more interesting than the public learning, not from any vaunt of ours, but from their own observation, that we have access to early and accurate information in point of fact. The Edinburgh Review has profited much by the pains which the Opposition party have taken to possess the writers of all the information they could give them on public matters. Let me repeat that you, my dear sir, from enjoying the confidence of Mr. Canning and other persons in power, may easily obtain the confidential information necessary to give credit to the work, and communicate it to such as you may think proper to employ in laying it before the public.

"Concerning the mode and time of publication, I think you will be of opinion that monthly, in the present dearth of good subjects of Review, would be too often, and that a quarterly publication would both give you less trouble, and be amply sufficient for discussing all that is likely to be worth discussion. The name to be assumed is of some consequence, though any one of little pretension will do. We might, for example, revive the 'English Review,' which was the name of Gilbert Stewart's. Regular correspondents ought to be sought after, but I should be little afraid of finding such, were the reputation of the Review once decidedly established by three or four numbers of the very first order. As it would be essential to come on the public by surprise, that no unreasonable expectation or artificial misrepresentation might prejudice its success, the authors employed in the first number ought to be few and of the first rate. The choosing of subjects would also be a matter of anxious consideration: for example, a good and distinct essay on Spanish affairs would be sufficient to give a character to the work. The lucubrations of the Edinburgh Review, on that subject, have done the work great injury with the public, and I am convinced that of the many thousands of copies now distributed of each Number, the quantity might be reduced one-half at least, by any work appearing, which, with the same literary talent and independent character, should speak a political language more familiar to the British ear than that of subjugation to France. At the same time, as I before hinted, it will be necessary to maintain the respect of the public by impartial disquisition; and I would not have it said, as may usually be predicated of other Reviews, that the sentiments of the critic were less determined by the value of the work than by the purpose it was written to serve. If a weak brother will unadvisedly put forth his hand to support even the ark of the constitution, I would expose his arguments, though I might approve of his intention and of his conclusions. I should think an open and express declaration of political tenets, or of opposition to works of a contrary tendency, ought for the same reason to be avoided. I think, from the little observation I have made, that the Whigs suffer most deeply from cool sarcastic reasoning and occasional ridicule. Having long had a sort of command of the press, from the neglect of all literary assistance on the part of those who thought their good cause should fight its own battle, they are apt to feel with great acuteness any assault in that quarter; and having been long accustomed to push, have in some degree lost the power to parry. It will not, therefore, be long before they make some violent retort, and I should not be surprised if it were to come through the Edinburgh Review. We might then come into close combat with a much better grace than if we had thrown down a formal defiance. I am, therefore, for going into a state of hostility without any formal declaration of war. Let our forces for a number or two consist of volunteers and amateurs, and when we have acquired some reputation, we shall soon levy and discipline forces of the line.

"After all, the matter is become very serious,—eight or nine thousand copies of the Edinburgh Review are regularly distributed, merely because there is no other respectable and independent publication of the kind. In this city, where there is not one Whig out of twenty men who read the work, many hundreds are sold; and how long the generality of readers will continue to dislike politics, so artfully mingled with information and amusement, is worthy of deep consideration. But it is not yet too late to stand in the breach; the first number ought, if possible, to be out in January, and if it can burst among them like a bomb, without previous notice, the effect will be more striking. Of those who might be intrusted in the first instance, you are a much better judge than I am. I think I can command the assistance of a friend or two here, particularly William Erskine, the Lord Advocate's brother-in-law and my most intimate friend. In London you have Malthus, George Ellis, the Roses, *cum pluribus aliis*. Richard Heber was with me when Murray came to my farm, and knowing his zeal for the good cause, I let him into our counsels. In Mr. Frere we have the hopes of a potent ally. The Rev. Reginald Heber would be an excellent coadjutor, and when I come to town I will sound Matthias. As strict secrecy would of course be observed, the diffidence of many might be overcome;—for scholars you can be at no loss while Oxford stands where it did,—and I think there will be no deficiency in the scientific articles.

"Once more I have to apologize for intruding on you this hasty, and therefore long, and probably confused letter; I trust your goodness will excuse my expressing any apology for submitting to your better judgment my sentiments on a plan of such consequence. I expect to be called to London early in the winter, perhaps next month. If you see Murray, as I suppose you will, I presume you will communicate to him such of my sentiments as have the good fortune to coincide with yours. Among the works in the first number, Fox's history, Grattan's speeches, a notable subject for a quizzing article, and any tract or pamphlet that will give an opportunity to treat of the Spanish affairs, would be desirable subjects of criticism. I am, with great respect, sir, your most obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

On the 18th of November, Scott enclosed to Mr. Ellis "the rough scroll" (that now transcribed) of his letter to Mr. Gifford;—"this being," he says, "one of the very few epistles of which I thought it will be as well to retain a copy." He then proceeds as follows:—

"Supposing you to have read said scroll, you must know further, that it has been received in a most favourable manner by Mr. Gifford, who approves of its contents in all respects, and that Mr. Canning has looked it over, and promised such aid as is therein required. I therefore wish you to be apprised fully of what could hardly be made the subject of writing, unless in all the confidence of friendship. Let me touch a string of much delicacy—the political character of the Review. It appears to me that this should be of a liberal and enlarged nature, resting upon principles—indulgent and conciliatory as far as possible upon mere party questions—but stern in detecting and exposing all attempts to sap our constitutional fabric. Religion is another slippery station; here also I would endeavour to be as impartial as the subject will admit of. This character of impartiality, as well as the maintenance of a high reputation in literature, is of as great consequence to such of our friends as are in the Ministry, as our more direct efforts in their favour; for these will only be successful in proportion to the influence we shall acquire by an extensive circulation; to procure which, the former qualities will be essentially necessary. Now, *entre nous*, will not our editor be occasionally a little warm and pepperish?—essential qualities in themselves, but which should not quite constitute the leading character of such a publication. This is worthy of a *memento*.

"As our start is of such immense consequence, don't you think Mr. Canning, though unquestionably our Atlas, might for a day find a Hercules on whom to devolve the burthen of the globe, while he writes us a review? I know what an audacious request this is; but suppose he should, as great statesmen sometimes do, take a political fit of the gout, and absent himself from a large ministerial dinner, which might give it him in good earnest,—dine at three on a chicken and a pint of wine,—and lay the foundation at least of one good article? Let us once get afloat, and our labour is not worth talking of; but, till then, all hands must work hard.

"Is it necessary to say that I agree entirely with you in the mode of treating even delinquents? The truth is, there is policy, as well as morality, in keeping our swords clear as well as sharp, and not forgetting the gentlemen in the critics. The public appetite is soon gorged with any particular style. The common Reviews, before the appearance of the Edinburgh, had become extremely mawkish; and, unless when prompted by the malice of the bookseller or reviewer, gave a dawdling, maudlin sort of applause to every thing that reached even mediocrity. The Edinburgh folks squeezed into their sauce plenty of acid, and were popular from novelty as well as from merit. The minor Reviews and other periodical publications, have *outrèd* the matter still farther, and given us all abuse, and no talent. But by the time the language of vituperative criticism becomes general—(which is now pretty nearly the case)—it affects the tympanum of the public ear no more than rogue or rascal from the cage of a parrot, or blood-and-wounds from a horse-barrack. This, therefore, we have to trust to, that decent, lively, and reflecting criticism, teaching men not to abuse books only, but to read and to judge them, will have the effect of novelty upon a public wearied with universal efforts at blackguard and indiscriminating satire. I have a long and very sensible letter from John Murray the bookseller, in which he touches upon this point very neatly. By the by, little Weber may be very useful upon antiquarian subjects, in the way of collecting information and making remarks; only, you or I must rewrite his lucubrations. I use him often as a pair of eyes in consulting books and collating, and as a pair of hands in making extracts. Constable, the great Edinburgh editor, has offended me excessively by tyrannizing over this poor Teutcher, and being rather rude when I interfered. It is a chance but I may teach him that he should not kick down the scaffolding before his house is quite built. Another bomb is about to break on him besides the Review. This is an Edinburgh Annual Register, to be conducted under the auspices of James Ballantyne, who is himself no despicable composer, and has secured excellent assistance. I cannot help him, of course, very far, but I will certainly lend him a lift as an adviser. I want all my friends to befriend this work, and will send you a *prospectus* when it is published. It will be *valde* anti-Foxite. This is a secret for the present.

"For heaven's sake do not fail to hold a meeting as soon as you can. Gifford will be admirable at service, but will require, or I mistake him much, both a spur and a bridle—a spur on account of habits of literary indolence induced by weak health—and a bridle because, having renounced in some degree general society, he cannot be supposed to have the habitual and instinctive feeling enabling him to judge at once and decidedly on the mode of letting his shafts fly down the breeze of popular opinion. But he has worth, wit, learning, and extensive information; is the friend of our friends in power, and can easily correspond with them; is in no danger of having private quarrels fixed on him for public criticism; nor very likely to be embarrassed by being thrown into action in public life alongside of the very people he has reviewed, and probably offended. All this is of the last importance to the discharge of his arduous duty. It would be cruel to add a word to this merciless epistle, excepting love to Mrs. Ellis and all friends. Leyden, by the by, is triumphant at Calcutta—a *Judge*, of all things!—and making money! He has flourished like a green bay tree under the auspices of Lord Minto, his countryman. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Among others whom Scott endeavoured to enlist in the service of the new Review was his brother Thomas, who, on the breaking up of his affairs in Edinburgh, had retired to the Isle of Man, and who shortly afterwards obtained the office in which he died, that of paymaster to the 70th regiment. The poet had a high opinion of his brother's literary talents, and thought that his knowledge of our ancient dramatists, and his vein of comic narration, might render him a very useful recruit. He thus communicates his views to Thomas Scott, on the 19th November, and, as might be expected, the communication is fuller and franker than any other on the subject.

To Thomas Scott, Esq., Douglas, Isle of Man.

"Dear Tom,

"Owing to certain pressing business I have not yet had time to complete my collection of Shadwell* for you, though it is now nearly ready.—I wish you to have all the originals to collate with the edition in 8vo. But I have a more pressing employment for your pen, and to which I think it particularly suited. You are to be informed, but under the seal of the strictest secrecy, that a plot has been long hatching by the gentlemen who were active in the Anti-jacobin paper, to countermine the Edinburgh Review, by establishing one which should display similar talent and independence with a better strain of politics. The management of this work was much pressed upon me;† but though great prospects of emolument were held out, I declined so arduous a task, and it has devolved upon Mr. Gifford, author of the Baviad, with whose wit and learning you are well acquainted. He made it a stipulation, however, that I should give all the assistance in my power, especially at the commencement; to which I am, for many reasons, nothing loth. Now, as I know no one who possesses more power of humour or perception of the ridiculous than yourself, I think your leisure hours might be most pleasantly passed in this way. Novels, light poetry, and quizzical books of all kinds might be sent you by the packet; you glide back your reviews in the same way, and touch, upon the publication of the number (quarterly), ten guineas per printed sheet of sixteen pages. If you are shy of communicating directly with Gifford, you may, for some time at least, send your communications through me, and I will revise them. We want the matter to be a *profound secret* till the first number is out. If you agree to try your skill, I will send you a novel or two. You must understand, as Gadshill tells the Chamberlain, that you are to be leagued with 'Trojans that thou dreamest not of, the which for sport-sake are content to do the profession some grace;' and thus far I assure you that, if by paying attention to your style and subject you can distinguish yourself creditably, it may prove a means of finding you powerful friends were any thing opening in your island. Constable, or rather that Bear his partner, has behaved to me of late not very civilly, and I owe Jeffrey a flap with a fox-tail on account of his review of Marmion, and thus doth the whirligig of time bring about my revenges. The late articles on Spain have given general disgust, and many have given up the Edinburgh Review on account of them.

"My mother holds out very well, and talks of writing by this packet. Her cask of herrings, as well as ours, red and white, have arrived safe, and prove most excellent. We have been both dining and supping upon them with great gusto, and are much obliged by your kindness in remembering us. Yours affectionately,

W. S."

I suspect, notwithstanding the opinion to the contrary expressed in the following extract, that the preparations for the new journal did not long escape the notice of either the editor or the publishers of the Edinburgh Review. On receiving the celebrated *Declaration of Westminster* on the subject of the Spanish war, which bears date the 15th December, 1808, Scott says to Ellis:—

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* Mr. T. Scott had meditated an edition of Shadwell's plays,—which, by the way, his brother considered as by no means meriting the utter neglect into which they had fallen, chiefly in consequence of Dryden's satire.

† This circumstance was not revealed to Mr. Murray. I presume, therefore, the invitation to Scott must have proceeded from Mr. Canning.

"I cannot help writing a few lines to congratulate you on the royal declaration. I suspect by this time the author is at Claremont,* for, if I mistake not egregiously, this spirited composition, as we say in Scotland, fathers itself in the manliness of its style. It has appeared, too, at a most fortunate time, when neither friend nor foe can impute it to temporary motives. Tell Mr. Canning that the old women of Scotland will defend the country with their distaffs, rather than that troops enough be not sent to make good so noble a pledge. Were the thousands that have mouldered away in petty conquests or Liliputian expeditions united to those we have now in that country, what a band would Moore have under him! . . . . . . Jeffrey has offered terms of pacification, engaging that no party politics should again appear in his Review. I told him I thought it was now too late, and reminded him that I had often pointed out to him the consequences of letting his work become a party tool. He said 'he did not care for the consequences—there were but four men he feared as opponents.'—'Who were these?'—'Yourself for one.'—'Certainly you pay me a great compliment; depend upon it I will endeavour to deserve it.'—'Why, you would not join against me?'—'Yes I would, if I saw a proper opportunity: not against you personally, but against your politics.'—'You are privileged to be violent.'—'I don't ask any privilege for undue violence. But who are your other foemen?'—'George Ellis and Southey.' The fourth he did not name. All this was in great good-humour; and next day I had a very affecting note from him, in answer to an invitation to dinner. He has no suspicion of the Review whatever; but I thought I could not handsomely suffer him to infer that I would be influenced by those private feelings respecting *him*, which, on more than one occasion, he has laid aside when I was personally concerned."

As to Messrs Constable and Co., it is not to be supposed that the rumours of the rival journal would tend to soothe those disagreeable feelings between them and Scott, of which I can trace the existence several months beyond the date of Mr. Murray's arrival at Ashestiel. Something seems to have occurred before the end of 1808 which induced Scott to suspect that, among other sources of uneasiness had been a repentant grudge in the minds of those booksellers as to their bargain about the new edition of Swift; and on the 2d of January, 1809, I find him requesting, that if, on reflection, they thought they had hastily committed themselves, the deed might be forthwith cancelled. On the 11th of the same month, Messrs Constable reply as follows:—

To Walter Scott, Esq.

"Sir,

"We are anxious to assure you that we feel no dissatisfaction at any part of our bargain about Swift. Viewing it as a safe and respectable speculation, we should be very sorry to agree to your relinquishing the undertaking, and indeed rely with confidence on its proceeding as originally arranged. We regret that you have not been more willing to overlook the unguarded expression of our Mr. Hunter about which you complain. We are very much concerned that any circumstance should have occurred that should thus interrupt our friendly intercourse; but as we are not willing to believe that we have done any thing which should prevent our being again friends, we may at least be permitted to express a hope that matters may hereafter be restored to their old footing between us, when the misrepresentations of interested persons may cease to be remembered. At any rate, you will always find us, what we trust we have ever been, Sir, your faithful servants,

A. CONSTABLE & Co."

Scott answers:

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* Scott's friend had mentioned that he expected a visit from Mr. Canning, at Claremont, in Surrey; which beautiful seat continued in the possession of the Ellis family, until it was purchased by the crown, on the marriage of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, in 1816.

To Messrs. Constable and Co.

"Edinburgh, 12th January, 1809.

"Gentlemen,

"To resume, for the last time, the disagreeable subject of our difference, I must remind you of what I told Mr. Constable personally, that no *single unguarded expression*, much less the misrepresentation of any person whatever, would have influenced me to quarrel with any of my friends. But if Mr. Hunter will take the trouble to recollect the general opinion he has expressed of my undertakings, and of my ability to execute them, upon many occasions during the last five months, and his whole conduct in the bargain about Swift, I think he ought to be the last to wish his interest compromised on my account. I am only happy the breach has taken place before there was any real loss to complain of, for although I have had my share of popularity, I cannot expect it to be more lasting than that of those who have lost it after deserving it much better.

"In the present circumstances, I have only a parting favour to request of your house, which is, that the portrait for which I sat at Raeburn shall be considered as done at my debit, and for myself. It shall be of course forthcoming for the fulfilment of any engagement you may have made about engraving, if such exists. Sadler will now be soon out, when we will have a settlement of our accounts. I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

Walter Scott."

Mr. Constable declined, in very handsome terms, to give up the picture. But for the present the breach was complete. Among other negotiations which Scott had patronised twelve months before, was one concerning the publication of Miss Seward's poems. On the 19th of March, 1809, he writes as follows to that lady:—

> "Constable, like many other folks who learn to undervalue the means by which they have risen, has behaved, or rather suffered his partner to behave, very uncivilly towards me. But they may both live to know that they should not have kicked down the ladder till they were sure of their footing. The very last time I spoke to him on business was about your poems, which he promised faithfully to write about. I understood him to decline your terms, in which I think he acted wrong; but I had neither influence to change his opinion, nor inclination to interfere with his resolution. He is a very enterprising, and, I believe, a thoroughly honest man, but his vanity in some cases overpowers his discretion."

One word as to the harsh language in which Constable's then partner is mentioned in several of the preceding letters. This Mr. Hunter was, I am told by friends of mine who knew him well, a man of considerable intelligence and accomplishments, to whose personal connexions and weight in society the house of Constable and Co. owed a great accession of business and influence. He was, however, a very keen politician; regarded Scott's Toryism with a fixed bitterness; and, moreover, could never conceal his impression that Scott ought to have embarked in no other literary undertakings whatever, until he had completed his edition of Swift. It is not wonderful that, not having been bred regularly to the bookselling business, he should have somewhat misapprehended the obligation which Scott had incurred when the bargain for that work was made; and his feeling of his own station and consequence was no doubt such as to give his style of conversation on doubtful questions of business, a tone for which Scott had not been prepared by his previous intercourse with Mr. Constable. The defection of the poet was, however, at once regretted and resented by both these partners; and Constable, I am told, often vented his wrath in figures as lofty as Scott's own. "Ay," he would say, stamping on the ground with a savage smile, "Ay, there is such a thing as rearing the oak until it can support itself."

All this leads us to the second stage, one still more unwise and unfortunate than the first, in the history of Scott's commercial connexion with the Ballantynes. The scheme of starting a new bookselling house in Edinburgh, begun in the shortsighted heat of pique, had now been matured;—I cannot add, either with composed observation or rational forecast—for it was ultimately settled that the ostensible and chief managing partner should be a person without capital, and neither by training nor by temper in the smallest degree qualified for such a situation; more especially where the field was to be taken against long experience, consummate skill, and resources which, if not so large as all the world supposed them, were still in comparison vast, and admirably organized. The rash resolution was, however, carried into effect, and a deed deposited, for secrecy's sake, in the hands of Scott, bound him as one-third partner, James Ballantyne having also a share, in this firm of John Ballantyne and Co., booksellers, Edinburgh.—"*Ringdumfunnidos*" was installed in Hanover Street as the avowed rival of "The Crafty."

The existing bond of copartnership is dated in July 1809; but I suspect this had been a revised edition. It is certain that the new house were openly mustering their forces some weeks before Scott desired to withdraw his Swift from the hands of the old one in January. This appears from several of the letters that passed between him and Ellis while Gifford was arranging the materials for the first number of the Quarterly Review, and also between him and his friend Southey, to whom, perhaps, more than any other single writer, that journal owed its ultimate success.

To Ellis, for example, he says, on the 13th December, 1808—

"Now let me call your earnest attention to another literary undertaking, which is, in fact, a subsidiary branch of the same grand plan. I transmit the *prospectus* of an Edinburgh Annual Register. I have many reasons for favouring this work as much as I possibly can. In the first place, there is nothing even barely tolerable of this nature, though so obviously necessary to future history. Secondly, Constable was on the point of arranging one on the footing of the Edinburgh Review, and subsidiary thereunto,—a plan which has been totally disconcerted by our occupying the vantage-ground. Thirdly, this work will be very well managed. The two Mackenzies,[*] William Erskine, *cum plurimis aliis*, are engaged in the literary department, and that of science is conducted by Professor Leslie, a great philosopher, and as abominable an animal as I ever saw. He writes, however, with great eloquence, and is an enthusiast in mathematical, chemical, and mineralogical pursuits. I hope to draw upon you in this matter, particularly in the historical department, to which your critical labours will naturally turn your attention. You will ask what I propose to do myself. In fact, though something will be expected, I cannot propose to be very active, unless the Swift is abandoned, of which I think there is some prospect, as I have reason to complain of very indifferent usage, not indeed from Constable, who is reduced to utter despair by the circumstance, but from the stupid impertinence of his partner, a sort of Whig run mad. I have some reason to believe that Ballantyne, whose stock is now immensely increased, and who is likely to enlarge it by marriage, will commence publisher. Constable threatened him with withdrawing his business from him as a printer, on account of his being a Constitutionalist. He will probably by this false step establish a formidable rival in his own line of publishing, which will be most just retribution. I intend to fortify

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[*] The Man of Feeling, and Colin Mackenzie of Portmore.

Ballantyne by promising him my continued friendship, which I hope may be of material service to him. He is much liked by the literary people here; has a liberal spirit, and understanding business very completely, with a good general idea of literature, I think he stands fair for success.

"But, Oh! Ellis, these cursed, double cursed news, have sunk my spirits so much, that I am almost at disbelieving a Providence. God forgive me! But I think some evil demon has been permitted, in the shape of this tyrannical monster whom God has sent on the nations visited in his anger. I am confident he is proof against lead and steel, and have only hopes that he may be shot with a silver bullet,* or drowned in the torrents of blood which he delights to shed. Oh! for True Thomas and Lord Soulis's cauldron.† Adieu, my dear Ellis. God bless you!—I have been this three days writing this by snatches."

The "cursed news" here alluded to were those of Napoleon's advance by Somosierra, after the dispersion of the armies of Blake and Castaños. On the 23d of the same month, when the Treason of Morla and the fall of Madrid were known in Edinburgh, he thus resumes:—(Probably while he wrote, some cause with which he was not concerned was occupying the Court of Session:)—

"Dear Ellis,—I have nothing better to do but to vent my groans. I cannot but feel exceedingly low. I distrust what we call thoroughbred soldiers terribly, when any thing like the formation of extensive plans, of the daring and critical nature which seems necessary for the emancipation of Spain, is required from them. Our army is a poor school for genius—for the qualities which naturally and deservedly attract the applause of our generals, are necessarily exercised upon a small scale. I would to God Wellesley were now at the head of the English in Spain. His late examination shows his acute and decisive talents for command;‡ and although I believe in my conscience, that when he found himself superseded, he suffered the pigs to run through the business, when he might in some measure have prevented them—

'Yet give the haughty devil his due,
Though bold his quarterings, they are true.'

Such a man, with an army of 40,000 or 50,000 British, with the remains of the Gallician army, and the additional forces which every village would furnish in case of success, might possess himself of Burgos, open a communication with Arragon, and even Navarre, and place Buonaparte in the precarious situation of a general with 100,000 enemies between him and his supplies;—for I presume neither Castaños nor Palafox are so broken as to be altogether disembodied. But a general who is always looking over his shoulder, and more intent on saving his own army than on doing the service on which he is sent, will hardly, I fear, be found capable of forming or executing a plan which its very daring character might render successful. What would we think of an admiral who should bring back his fleet and tell us old Keppel's story of a lee-shore, and the risk of his Majesty's vessels? Our sailors have learned that his Majesty's ships were built to be stranded, or burnt, or sunk, or at least to encounter the risk of these contingencies, when his service requires it; and I heartily wish our generals would learn to play for the gammon, and not to sit down contented with a mere saving game. What, however, can we say of Moore, or how judge of his actions, since the Supreme Junta have shown themselves so miserably incapable of the arduous exertions expected from them? Yet, like Pistol, they spoke bold words at the bridge too, and I admired their firmness in declaring O'Farrel, and the rest of the Frenchified Spaniards, traitors. But they may have Roman pride, and want Roman talent to support it; and in short, unless God Almighty should raise among them one of those extraordinary geniuses who seem to be created for the emergencies of an oppressed people, I confess I still incline to despondence. If Canning could send a portion of his own spirit with the generals he sends forth, my hope would be high indeed. The proclamation was truly gallant.

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* See note, "Proof against shot given by Satan."—*Waverley Novels*, vol. x. p. 40.

† "On a circle of stones they placed the pot,
On a circle of stones but barely nine;
They heated it red and fiery hot,
Till the burnish'd brass did glimmer and shine.
They roll'd him up in a sheet of lead,
A sheet of lead for a funeral pall.
They plunged him in the cauldron red,
And melted him, lead, and bones and all."

See the Ballad of *Lord Soulis*, and notes: *Border Minstrelsy*, vol. iv. pp. 235–266.

‡ This refers to Sir Arthur Wellesley's evidence before the Court of Inquiry into the circumstances which led to the Convention (miscalled) of Cintra. For the best answer to the then popular suspicion, which Scott seems to have partaken, as to the conduct of Sir Arthur when superseded in the moment of victory at Vimiero, I refer to the contemporary despatches lately published in Colonel Gurwood's invaluable compilation.

"As to the Annual Register, I do agree that the Prospectus is in too stately a tone—yet I question if a purer piece of composition would have attracted the necessary attention. We must sound a trumpet before we open a show. You will say we have added a tambourin; but the mob will the more readily stop and gaze; nor would their ears be so much struck by a sonta from Viotti. Do you know the Review begins to get wind here? An Edinburgh bookseller asked me to recommend him for the sale here, and said he heard it confidentially from London.—Ever yours, W. S."

I may also introduce here a letter of about the same date, and referring chiefly to the same subjects, addressed by Scott to his friend, Mr. Charles Sharpe,* then at Oxford. The allusion at the beginning is to a drawing of Queen Elizabeth, as seen "dancing high and disposedly," in her private chamber, by the Scotch ambassador, Sir James Melville, whose description of the exhibition is one of the most amusing things in his Memoirs. This production of Mr. Sharpe's pencil, and the delight with which Scott used to expatiate on its merits, must be well remembered by every one that ever visited the poet at Abbotsford.—Some of the names mentioned in this letter as counted on by the projectors of the Quarterly Review will, no doubt, amuse the reader.

To Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., Christ Church, Oxford.

"Edinburgh, 30th December, 1808.

"My dear Sharpe,

"The inimitable virago came safe, and was welcomed by the inextinguishable laughter of all who looked upon her caprioles. I was unfortunately out of town for a few days, which prevented me from acknowledging instantly what gave me so much pleasure, both on account of its intrinsic value, and as a mark of your kind remembrance. You have, I assure you, been upmost in my thoughts for some time past, as I have a serious design on your literary talents, which I am very anxious to engage in one or both of the two following schemes. *Imprimis*, it has been long the decided resolution of Mr. Canning and some of his literary friends, particularly Geo. Ellis, Malthus, Frere, W. Rose, &c., that something of an independent Review ought to be started in London. This plan is now on the point of being executed, after much consultation. I have strongly advised that politics be avoided, unless in cases of great national import, and that their tone be then moderate and manly; but the general tone of the publication is to be literary. William Gifford is editor, and I have promised to endeavour to recruit for him a few spirited young men able and willing to assist in such an undertaking. I confess you were chiefly in my thoughts when I made this promise; but it is a subject which for a thousand reasons I would rather have talked over than written about—among others more prominent, I may reckon my great abhorrence of pen and ink, for writing has been so long a matter of duty with me, that it is become as utterly abominable to me as matters of duty usually are. Let me entreat you, therefore, to lay hold of Macneill,* or any other new book you like, and give us a good hacking review of it. I retain so much the old habit of a barrister, that I cannot help adding the fee is ten guineas a sheet, which may serve to buy an odd book now and then—as good play for nothing, you know, as work for nothing; but besides this, your exertions in this cause, if you shall choose to make any, will make you more intimately acquainted with a very pleasant literary coterie than introductions of a more formal kind; and if you happen to know George Ellis already, you must, I am sure, be pleased to take any trouble likely to produce an intimacy between you. The Hebers are also engaged, *item* Rogers, Southey, Moore (Anacreon), and others whose reputations Jeffrey has murdered, and who are rising to cry woe upon him, like the ghosts in King Richard; for your acute and perspicacious judgment must ere this have led you to suspect that this same new Review, which by the way is to be called 'the Quarterly,' is intended as a rival to the Edinburgh; and if it contains criticism not very inferior in point of talent, with the same independence on booksellers' influence (which has ruined all the English Reviews), I do not see why it should not divide with it the public favour. Observe carefully this plan is altogether distinct from one which has been proposed by the veteran Cumberland, to which is annexed the extraordinary proposal that each contributor shall place his name before his article, a stipulation which must prove fatal to the undertaking. If I did not think this likely to be a very well managed business, I would not recommend it to your consideration; but you see I am engaged with no 'foot land rakers, no long staff sixpenny strikers, but with nobility and tranquillity, burgomasters, and great oneyers,' and so forth.

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* Scott's acquaintance with Mr. Sharpe began when the latter was very young. He supplied Scott when compiling the Minstrelsy with the ballad of the "Tower of Repentance," &c. See vol. iv. pp. 307—323.

"The other plan refers to the enclosed prospectus, and has long been a favourite scheme of mine, of William Erskine's, and some of my other cronies here. Mr. Ballantyne, the editor, only undertakes for the inferior departments of the work, and for keeping the whole matter in train. We are most anxious to have respectable contributors, and the smallest donation in any department, poetry, antiquities, &c. &c., will be most thankfully accepted and registered. But the historical department is that in which I would chiefly wish to see you engaged. A lively luminous picture of the events of the last momentous year, is a task for the pen of a man of genius; as for materials, I could procure you access to many of a valuable kind. The appointments of our historian are £300 a-year—no deaf nuts. Another person† has been proposed, and written to, but I cannot any longer delay submitting the thing to your consideration. Of course, you are to rely on every assistance that can be afforded by your humble comdumble, as Swift says. I hope the great man will give us his answer shortly—and if his be negative, pray let yours be positive. Our politics we would wish to be constitutional, but not party. You see, my good friend, what it is to show your good parts before unquestionable judges.

"I am forced to conclude abruptly. Thine entirely,

W. Scott."

Mr. Morritt was by this time beginning to correspond with the poet pretty frequently. The first of their letters, however, that serves to throw light on Scott's personal proceedings, is the following:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. Rokeby Park, Yorkshire.

"Edinburgh, 14th January, 1809.

"My dear Sir,

"For a long while I thought my summons to London would have been immediate, and that I should have had the pleasure to wait upon you at Rokeby Park in my way to town. But, after due consideration, the commissioners on our Scottish reform of judicial proceedings resolved to begin their sittings at Edinburgh, and have been in full activity ever since last St. Andrew's day. You are not ignorant that in business of this nature, very much of the detail and of preparing the materials for the various meetings, necessarily devolves upon the clerk, and I cannot say but that my time has been fully occupied.

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* "The Pastoral, or Lyric Muse of Scotland; in three Cantos," 4to, by Hector Macneill, appeared in Dec. 1808.

† Mr. Southey—who finally undertook the task proposed to him.

"Mean while, however, I have been concocting, at the instigation of various loyal and well disposed persons, a grand scheme of opposition to the proud critics of Edinburgh. It is now matured in all its branches, and consists of the following divisions. A new review in London, to be called the Quarterly, William Gifford to be the editor; George Ellis, Rose, Mr. Canning if possible, Frere, and all the ancient Anti-Jacobins to be concerned. The first number is now in hand, and the allies, I hope and trust, securely united to each other. I have promised to get them such assistance as I can, and most happy should I be to prevail upon you to put your hand to the ark. You can so easily run off an article either of learning or of fun, that it would be inexcusable not to afford us your assistance. Then, sir, to turn the flank of Messrs. Constable and Co. and to avenge myself of certain impertinences which, in the vehemence of their Whiggery, they have dared to indulge in towards me, I have prepared to start against them at Whitsunday first the celebrated printer, Ballantyne (who had the honour of meeting you at Ashestiel), in the shape of an Edinburgh publisher, with a long purse and a sound political creed, not to mention an alliance offensive and defensive with young John Murray of Fleet Street, the most enlightened and active of the London trade. By this means I hope to counterbalance the predominating influence of Constable and Co., who at present have it in their power and inclination to forward or suppress any book as they approve or dislike its political tendency. Lastly, I have caused the said Ballantyne to venture upon an Edinburgh Annual Register, of which I send you a prospectus. I intend to help him myself as far as time will admit, and hope to procure him many respectable coadjutors.

"My own motions southwards remain undetermined, but I conceive I may get to town about the beginning of March, when I expect to find you *en famille* in Portland Place. Our Heber will then most likely be in town, and altogether I am much better pleased that the journey is put off till the lively season of gaiety.

"I am busy with my edition of Swift, and treasure your kind hints for my direction as I advance. In summer I think of going to Ireland to pick up any thing that may be yet recoverable of the Dean of St. Patrick's. Mrs. Scott joins me in kindest and best respects to Mrs. Morritt. I am, with great regard, dear sir, your faithful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

The two following letters seem to have been written at the *clerk's table*, the first shortly before, and the second very soon after, the news of the battle of Corunna reached Scotland:—

To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick.

"Edinburgh, 14th January, 1809.

"Dear Southey,

"I have been some time from home in the course of the holidays, but immediately on my return set about procuring the books you wished to see. There are only three of them in our library, namely—

Dobrizzhoffer de Abiponibus, 3 vols.
A French translation of Gomella's History of Oronoquo.
Ramuzio Navigazioni, &c. &c.

Of these I can only lay my hands immediately on Dobrizzhoffer, which I have sent off by the Carlisle coach, addressed to the care of Jollie the bookseller for you. I do this at my own risk, because we never grant license to send the books out of Scotland, and should I be found to have done so I may be censured, and perhaps my use of the library suspended. At the same time, I think it hard you should take a journey in this deadly cold weather, and trust you will make early enquiry after the book. Keep it out of sight while you use it, and return it as soon as you have finished. I suppose these same Abipones were a nation to my own heart's content, being, as the title-page informs me, *bellicosi et equestres*, like our old Border lads. Should you think of coming hither, which perhaps might be the means of procuring you more information than I can make you aware of, I bespeak you for my guest. I can give you a little chamber in the wall, and you shall go out and in as quietly and freely as your heart can desire, without a human creature saying 'why doest thou so!' Thalaba is in parturition too, and you should in decent curiosity give an eye after him. Yet I will endeavour to recover the other books (now lent out), and send them to you in the same way as Dob. travels, unless you recommend another conveyance. But I expect this generosity on my part will rather stir your gallantry to make us a visit when this abominable storm has passed away. My present occupation is highly unpoetical—clouting, in short, and cobbling our old Scottish system of jurisprudence, with a view to reform. I am clerk to a commission under the authority of Parliament for this purpose, which keeps me more than busy enough.

"I have had a high quarrel with Constable and Co. The Edinburgh Review has driven them quite crazy, and its success led them to undervalue those who have been of most use to them—but they shall dearly abye it. The worst is that, being out of a publishing house, I have not interest to be of any service to Coleridge's intended paper.* Ballantyne, the printer, intends to open shop here on the part of his brother, and I am sure will do all he can to favour the work. Does it positively go on?

"I have read Wordsworth's lucubrations in the Courier,† and much agree with him. Alas! we want every thing but courage and virtue in this desperate contest. Skill, knowledge of mankind, ineffable unhesitating villany, combination of movement and combination of means, are with our adversary. We can only fight like mastiffs, boldly, blindly, and faithfully. I am almost driven to the pass of the Covenanters, when they told the Almighty in their prayers, he should no longer be their God; and I really believe, a few Gazettes more will make me turn Turk or Infidel. Believe me, in great grief of spirit, dear Southey, ever yours.

WALTER SCOTT.

"Mrs. Scott begs kind remembrance to Mrs. Southey. The bed in the said chamber in the wall is a double one."

To the same.

"Edinburgh, 31st January, 1809.

"My dear Southey,

"Yesterday I received your letter, and to-day I despatched Gomella and the third volume of Ramuzio. The other two volumes can also be sent, if you should find it necessary to consult them. The parcel is addressed to the paternal charge of your Keswick carrier. There is no hurry in returning these volumes, so don't derange your operations by hurrying your extracts, only keep them from any profane eye. I dipped into Gomella while I was waiting for intelligence from you, and was much edified by the *bonhommie* with which the miracles of the Jesuits are introduced.

"The news from Spain gave me such a mingled feeling, that I never suffered so much in my whole life from the disorder of spirits occasioned by affecting intelligence. My mind has naturally a strong military bent, though my path in life has been so very different. I love a drum and a soldier as heartily as ever Uncle Toby did, and between the pride arising from our gallant bearing, and the deep regret that so much bravery should run to waste, I spent a most disordered and agitated night, never closing my eyes but what I was harassed with visions of broken ranks, bleeding soldiers, dying horses—'and all the current of a heady fight.' I agree with you that we want energy in our cabinet—or rather their opinions are so different, that they come to wretched compositions between them, which are worse than the worst course decidedly followed out. Canning is most anxious to support the Spaniards, and would have had a second army at Corunna, but for the positive demand of poor General Moore that empty transports should be sent thither. So the reinforcements were disembarked. I fear it will be found that Moore was rather an excellent officer than a general of those comprehensive and daring views necessary in his dangerous situation. Had Wellesley been there, the battle of Corunna would have been fought and won at Somosierra, and the ranks of the victors would have been reinforced by the population of Madrid. Would to God we had yet 100,000 men in Spain. I fear not Buonaparte's tactics. The art of fence may do a great deal, but '*a la stoccata*' as Mercutio says, cannot carry it away from national valour and personal strength. The Opposition have sold or bartered every feeling of patriotism for the most greedy and selfish *egoisme*.

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* Mr. Coleridge's "Friend" was originally published in weekly papers.

† Mr. Wordsworth's Remarks on the Convention of Cintra were afterwards collected in a pamphlet.

"Ballantyne's brother is setting up here as a bookseller, chiefly for publishing. I will recommend Coleridge's paper to him as strongly as I can. I hope by the time it is commenced he will be enabled to send him a handsome order. From my great regard for his brother, I shall give this young publisher what assistance I can. He is understood to start against Constable and the Reviewers, and publishes the Quarterly. Indeed he is in strict alliance, offensive and defensive, with John Murray of Fleet Street. I have also been labouring a little for the said Quarterly, which I believe you will detect. I hear very high things from Gifford of your article. About your visit to Edinburgh, I hope it will be a month later than you now propose, because my present prospects lead me to think I must be in London the whole month of April. Early in May I must return, and will willingly take the lakes in my way in hopes you will accompany me to Edinburgh, which you positively must not think of visiting in my absence.

"Lord Advocate, who is sitting behind me, says the Ministers have resolved not to abandon the Spaniards *coute qui coute*. It is a spirited determination—but they must find a general who has, as the Turks say, *le Diable au corps*, and who, instead of standing staring to see what they mean to do, will teach them to dread those surprises and desperate enterprises by which they have been so often successful. Believe me, dear Southey, yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT.

"Mrs. Scott joins me in best compliments to Mrs. Southey. I hope she will have a happy hour. Pray, write me word when the books come safe. What is Wordsworth doing, and where the devil is his Doe? I am not sure if he will thank me for proving that all the Nortons escaped to Flanders, one excepted. I never knew a popular tradition so totally groundless as that respecting their execution at York."

CHAPTER XIX.

CASE OF A POETICAL TAILOR CONDEMNED TO DEATH AT EDINBURGH—HIS LETTERS TO SCOTT—DEATH OF CAMP—SCOTT IN LONDON—MR. MORRITT'S DESCRIPTION OF HIM AS "A LION" IN TOWN—DINNER AT MR. SOTHEBY'S—COLERIDGE'S FIRE, FAMINE, AND SLAUGHTER—THE QUARTERLY REVIEW STARTED—FIRST VISIT TO ROKEBY—THE LADY OF THE LAKE BEGUN—EXCURSION TO THE TROSSACHS AND LOCH LOMOND—LETTER ON BYRON'S ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS—DEATH OF DANIEL SCOTT—CORRESPONDENCE ABOUT MR. CANNING'S DUEL WITH LORD CASTLEREAGH—MISS BAILLIE'S FAMILY LEGEND ACTED AT EDINBURGH—THEATRICAL ANECDOTES—KEMBLE—SIDDONS—TERRY—LETTER ON THE DEATH OF MISS SEWARD.—1809-1810.

IN the end of 1808, a young man, by name Andrew Stewart, who had figured for some years before as a poetical contributor to the Scots Magazine, and inserted there, among other things, a set of stanzas in honour of The Last Minstrel,* was tried, and capitally convicted, on a charge of burglary. He addressed, some weeks after his sentence had been pronounced, the following letters:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Castle Street.

" Edinburgh Tolbooth, 20th January, 1809.

" Sir,

" Although I am a stranger to you, yet I am not to your works, which I have read and admired, and which will continue to be read and admired as long as there remains a taste for true excellence. Previous to committing the crime for which I am now convicted, I composed several poems in the Scottish dialect, which I herewith send for your perusal, and humbly hope you will listen to my tale of misery. I have been a truly unfortunate follower of the Muses. I was born in Edinburgh, of poor, but honest parents. My father is by trade a bookbinder, and my mother dying in 1798, he was left a widower, with five small children, who have all been brought up by his own industry. As soon as I was fit for a trade, he bound me apprentice to a tailor in Edinburgh, but owing to his using me badly, I went to law. The consequence was, I got up my indentures after being only two years in his service. To my father's trade I have to ascribe my first attachment to the Muses. I perused with delight the books that came in the way; and the effusions of the poets of my country I read with rapture. I now formed the resolution of not binding myself to a trade again, as by that means I might get my propensity for reading followed. I acted as clerk to different people, and my character was irreproachable. I determined to settle in life, and for that purpose I married a young woman I formed a strong attachment to. Being out of employment these last nine months, I suffered all the hardships of want, and saw

'Poverty with empty hand,
And eager look, half-naked stand.'—*Fergusson.*

Reduced to this miserable situation, with my wife almost starving, and having no friends to render me the smallest assistance, I resided in a furnished room till I was unable to pay the rent, and then I was literally turned out of doors, like poor Dermody, in poverty and rags. Having no kind hand stretched out to help me, I associated with company of very loose manners, till then strangers to me, and by them I was led to commit the crime I am condemned to suffer for. But my mind is so agitated, I can scarce narrate my tale of misery. My age is only twenty-three, and to all appearance will be cut off in the prime. I was tried along with my brother, Robert Stewart, and John M'Intyre, for breaking into the workshop of Peter More, calico-glazer, Edinburgh, and received the dreadful sentence to be executed on the 22d of February next. We have no friends to apply to for Royal Mercy. If I had any kind friend to mention my case to my Lord Justice-Clerk, perhaps I might get my sentence mitigated. You will see my poems are of the humorous cast. Alas! it is now the contrary. I remain your unfortunate humble servant,

ANDREW STEWART."

To the same.

"Toolbooth, Sunday.

" Sir,

" I received your kind letter last night, enclosing one pound sterling, for which I have only to request you will accept the return of a grateful heart. My prayers while on earth, will be always for your welfare. Your letter came like a minis tering angel to me. The idea of my approaching end darts across my brain; and, as our immortal bard, Shakspeare, says, 'harrows up my soul.' Some time since, when chance threw in my way Sir William Forbes's Life of Beattie, the account of the closing scene of Principal Campbell, as therein mentioned, made a deep impression on my mind. 'At a time,' says he, 'when Campbell was just expiring, and had told his wife and niece so, a cordial happened unexpectedly to give some relief. As soon as he was able to speak, he said, he wondered to see their faces so melancholy and covered with tears at the apprehension of his departure. '*At that instant*,' said he, '*I felt my mind in such a state in the thoughts of my immediate dissolution, that I can express my feelings in no other way than by saying I was in a rapture*.' There is something awfully satisfactory in the above.

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* One verse of this production will suffice:—

" Sweetest Minstrel that e'er sung
Of valorous deeds by Scotia done,
Whose wild notes warbled in the win',
Delightful strain!
O'er hills and dales, and vales amang,
We've heard again,' &c.

"I have to mention, as a dying man, that it was not the greed of money that made me commit the crime, but the extreme pressure of poverty and want.

"How silent seems all—not a whisper is heard,
Save the guardians of night when they bawl;
How dreary and wild appears all around;
No pitying voice near my call.

"O life, what are all thy gay pleasures and cares,
When deprived of sweet liberty's smile?
Not hope in all thy gay charms arrayed,
Can one heavy hour now beguile.

"How sad is the poor convict's sorrowful lot,
Condemned in these walls to remain,
When torn from those nearest his heart,
Perhaps ne'er to view them again.

"The beauties of morning now burst on my view,
Remembrance of scenes that are past,
When contentment sat smiling, and happy my lot,
Scenes, alas! formed not for to last.

"Now fled are the hours I delighted to roam
Scotia's hills, dales, and valleys among,
And with rapture would list to the songs of her bards,
And love's tale as it flowed from the tongue.

"Nought but death now awaits me, how dread, but true,
How ghastly its form does appear;
Soon silent the muse that delighted to view
And sing of the sweets of the year.

"You are the first gentleman I ever sent my poems to, and I never corrected any of them, my mind has been in such a state. I remain, sir, your grateful unfortunate servant,

ANDREW STEWART."

It appears that Scott, and his good-natured old friend, Mr. Manners the bookseller, who happened at this time to be one of the bailies of Edinburgh, exerted their joint influence in this tailor-poet's behalf, and with such success, that his sentence was commuted for one of transportation for life. A thin octavo pamphlet, entitled, "POEMS, chiefly in the Scottish dialect, by Andrew Stewart; printed for the benefit of the Author's Father, and sold by Manners & Miller, and A. Constable & Co., 1809," appeared soon after the convict's departure for Botany Bay. But as to his fortune in that new world, I possess no information. There seemed to me something so striking in the working of his feelings as expressed in his letters to Scott, that I thought the reader would forgive this little episode.

In the course of February, Mr. John Ballantyne had proceeded to London, for the purpose of introducing himself to the chief publishers there in his new capacity, and especially of taking Mr. Murray's instructions respecting the Scotch management of the Quarterly Review. As soon as the spring vacation began, Scott followed him by sea. He might naturally have wished to be at hand while his new partner was forming arrangements on which so much must depend; but some circumstances in the procedure of the Scotch Law Commission had made the Lord Advocate request his presence at this time in town. There he and Mrs. Scott took up their quarters, as usual, under the roof of their kind old friends the Dumergues; while their eldest girl enjoyed the advantage of being domesticated with the Miss Baillies at Hampstead. They staid more than two months, and this being his first visit to town since his fame had been crowned by Marmion, he was of course more than ever the object of general attention. Mr. Morritt saw much of him, both at his own house in Portland Place and elsewhere, and I transcribe a few sentences from his *memoranda* of the period.

"Scott," his friend says, "more correctly than any other man I ever knew, appreciated the value of that apparently enthusiastic *engouement* which the world of London shows to the fashionable wonder of the year. During the sojourn of 1809, the homage paid him would have turned the head of any less gifted man of eminence. It neither altered his opinions, nor produced the affectation of despising it; on the contrary, he received it, cultivated it, and repaid it in his own coin. 'All this is very flattering,' he would say, 'and very civil; and if people are amused with hearing me tell a parcel of old stories, or recite a pack of ballads to lovely young girls and gaping matrons, they are easily pleased, and a man would be very ill-natured who would not give pleasure so cheaply conferred.' If he dined with us and found any new faces, 'Well, do you want me to play lion to-day?' was his usual question—'I will roar if you like it to your heart's content.' He would, indeed, in such cases, put forth all his inimitable powers of entertainment—and day after day surprised me by their unexpected extent and variety. Then, as the party dwindled, and we were left alone, he laughed at himself, quoted, 'yet know that I one Snug the joiner am—no lion fierce,' &c.—and was at once himself again.

"He often lamented the injurious effects for literature and genius resulting from the influence of London celebrity on weaker minds, especially in the excitement of ambition for this subordinate and ephemeral *reputation du salon*. 'It may be a pleasant gale to sail with,' he said, 'but it never yet led to a port that I should like to anchor in;' nor did he willingly endure, either in London or in Edinburgh, the little exclusive circles of literary society, much less their occasional fastidiousness and petty partialities.

"One story which I heard of him from Dr. Howley, now Archbishop of Canterbury (for I was not present), was very characteristic. The doctor was one of a grand congregation of lions, where Scott and Coleridge, *cum multis aliis*, attended at Sotheby's. Poets and poetry were the topics of the table, and there was plentiful recitation of effusions as yet unpublished, which of course obtained abundant applause. Coleridge repeated more than one, which, as Dr. H. thought, were eulogized by some of the company with something like affectation, and a desire to humble Scott by raising a poet of inferior reputation on his shoulders. Scott, however, joined in the compliments as cordially as any body, until, in his turn, he was invited to display some of his occasional poetry, much of which he must, no doubt, have written. Scott said he had published so much, he had nothing of his own left that he could think worth their hearing, but he would repeat a little copy of verses which he had shortly before seen in a provincial newspaper, and which seemed to him almost as good as any thing they had been listening to with so much pleasure. He repeated the stanzas now so well known of 'Fire, Famine, and Slaughter.' The applauses that ensued were faint—then came slight criticisms, from which Scott

> defended the unknown author. At last, a more bitter antagonist opened, and fastening upon one line, cried 'this at least is absolute nonsense.' Scott denied the charge—the Zoilus persisted—until Coleridge, out of all patience, exclaimed, 'For God's sake let Mr. Scott alone—I wrote the poem.' This exposition of the real worth of dinner criticism can hardly be excelled.[*]
>
> "He often complained of the real dulness of parties where each guest arrived under the implied and tacit obligation of exhibiting some extraordinary powers of talk or wit. 'If,' he said, 'I encounter men of the world, men of business, odd or striking characters of professional excellence in any department, I am in my element, for they cannot lionize me without my returning the compliment and learning something from them.' He was much with George Ellis, Canning, and Croker, and delighted in them,—as indeed who did not?—but he loved to study eminence of every class and sort, and his rising fame gave him easy access to gratify all his curiosity.

The meetings with Canning, Croker, and Ellis, to which Mr. Morritt alludes, were, as may be supposed, chiefly occupied with the affairs of the Quarterly Review. The first number of that Journal appeared while Scott was in London: it contained three articles from his pen—namely, one on the Reliques of Burns; another on the Chronicle of the Cid; and a third on Sir John Carr's Tour through Scotland. His conferences with the editor and publisher were frequent; and the latter certainly contemplated, at this time, a most close and intimate connexion with him, not only as a reviewer, but an author; and, consequently, with both the concerns of the Messrs. Ballantyne. Scott continued for some time to be a very active contributor to the Quarterly Review; nor, indeed, was his connexion with it ever entirely suspended. But John Ballantyne transacted business in a fashion which soon cooled, and in no very long time dissolved, the general "alliance offensive and defensive" with Murray, which Scott had announced before leaving Edinburgh to both Southey and Ellis.

On his return northwards he spent a fortnight in Yorkshire with Mr. Morritt; but his correspondence, from which I resume my extracts, will show, among other things, the lively impression made on him by his first view of Rokeby.

The next of these letters reminds me, however, that I should have mentioned sooner the death of Camp, the first of not a few dogs whose names will be "freshly remembered" as long as their master's works are popular. This favourite began to droop early in 1808, and became incapable of accompanying Scott in his rides: but he preserved his affection and sagacity to the last. At Ashestiel, as the servant was laying the cloth for dinner, he would address the dog lying on his mat by the fire, and say, "Camp, my good fellow, the sheriff's coming home by the ford—or by the hill;" and the sick animal would immediately bestir himself to welcome his master, going out at the back door, or the front door, according to the direction given, and advancing as far as he was able, either towards the ford of the Tweed, or the bridge over the Glenkinnon burn beyond Laird Nippy's gate. He died about January 1809, and was buried in a fine moonlight night, in the little garden behind the house in Castle Street, immediately opposite to the window at which Scott usually sat writing. My wife tells me she remembers the whole family standing in tears about the grave, as her father himself smoothed down the turf above Camp with the saddest expression of face she had ever seen in him. He had been engaged to dine abroad that day, but apologized on account of "the death of a dear old friend;" and Mr. Macdonald Buchanan was not at all surprised that he should have done so, when it came out next morning that Camp was no more.

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[*] It may amuse the reader to turn to Mr. Coleridge's own stately account of this lion-show in Grosvenor Street, in the preface to his celebrated Eclogue. There was one person present, it seems, who had been in the secret of its authorship—Sir Humphry Davy; and no one could have enjoyed the scene more than he must have done. "At the house," Coleridge says, "of a gentleman who, by the principles and corresponding virtues of a sincere Christian, consecrates a cultivated genius and the favourable accidents of birth, opulence, and splendid connexions, it was my good fortune to meet, in a dinner party, with more men of celebrity in science or polite literature than are commonly found collected around the same table. In the course of conversation, one of the party reminded an illustrious poet," &c &c.—*Coleridge's Poetical Works.* Edition, 1835. Vol. I, p. 274.

To George Ellis, Esq.

"Edinburgh, July 8, 1809.

"My dear Ellis,

"We reached home about a fortnight ago, having lingered a little while at Rokeby Park, the seat of our friend Morritt, and one of the most enviable places I have ever seen, as it unites the richness and luxuriance of English vegetation with the romantic variety of glen, torrent, and copse which dignifies our northern scenery. The Greta and Tees, two most beautiful and rapid rivers, join their currents in the demesne. The banks of the Lees resemble, from the height of the rocks, the glen of Roslin, so much and justly admired. The Greta is the scene of a comic romance,* of which I think I remember giving you the outline. It concerns the history of a 'Felon Sowe,'—

'Which won'd in Rokeby wood,
Ran endlong Greta side,'

bestowed by Ralph of Rokeby on the freres of Richmond—and the misadventures of the holy fathers in their awkward attempts to catch this intractable animal. We had the pleasure to find all our little folks well, and are now on the point of shifting quarters to Ashestiel. I have supplied the vacancy occasioned by the death of poor old Camp with a terrier puppy of the old shaggy Celtic breed. He is of high pedigree, and was procured with great difficulty by the kindness of Miss Dunlop of Dunlop; so I have christened him Wallace, as the donor is a descendant of the Guardian of Scotland. Having given you all this curious and valuable information about my own affairs, let me call your attention to the enclosed, which was in fact the principal cause of my immediately troubling you." * * *

The enclosure, and the rest of the letter, refer to the private affairs of Mr. Southey, in whose favour Scott had for some time back been strenuously using his interest with his friends in the Government. How well he had, while in London, read the feelings of some of those ministers towards each other, appears from various letters written upon his return to Scotland. It may be sufficient to quote part of one addressed to the distinguished author whose fortunes he was exerting himself to promote. To him Scott says (14th June).—

"Mr. Canning's opportunities to serve you will soon be numerous, or they will soon be gone altogether; for he is of a different mould from some of his colleagues, and a decided foe to those half measures which I know you detest as much as I do. It is not his fault that the cause of Spain is not at this moment triumphant. This I know, and the time will come when the world will know it too."

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* Scott printed this Ballad in the Notes to his poem of Rokeby.

Before fixing himself at Ashestiel for the autumn, he had undertaken to have a third poem ready for publication, by John Ballantyne, by the end of the year, and probably made some progress in the composition of the Lady of the Lake. On the rising of the Court in July, he went, accompanied by Mrs. Scott and his eldest daughter, to revisit the localities, so dear to him in the days of his juvenile rambling, which he had chosen for the scene of his fable. He gave a week to his old friends at Cambusmore, and ascertained, in his own person, that a good horseman, well mounted, might gallop from the shore of Loch Vennachar to the rock of Stirling within the space allotted for that purpose to Fitz James. From Cambusmore the party proceeded to Ross Priory, and, under the guidance of Mr. Macdonald Buchanan, explored the islands of Loch Lomond, Arrochar, Loch Sloy, and all the scenery of a hundred desperate conflicts between the Macfarlanes, the Colquhouns, and the Clan Alpine. At Buchanan House, which is very near Ross Priory, Scott's friends, Lady Douglas and Lady Louisa Stuart, were then visiting the Duke of Montrose; he joined them there, and read to them the Stag Chase, which he had just completed under the full influence of the *genius loci.*

It was on this occasion, at Buchanan House, that he first saw Lord Byron's "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." On this subject he says, in his Introduction to Marmion in 1830—

> "When Byron wrote his famous satire, I had my share of flagellation among my betters. My crime was having written a poem for a thousand pounds, which was no otherwise true than that I sold the copyright for that sum. Now, not to mention that an author can hardly be censured for accepting such a sum as the booksellers are willing to give him, especially as the gentlemen of the trade made no complaints of their bargain, I thought the interference with my private affairs was rather beyond the limits of literary satire. I was, moreover, so far from having had any thing to do with the offensive criticism in the Edinburgh, that I had remonstrated with the editor, because I thought the 'Hours of Idleness' treated with undue severity. They were written, like all juvenile poetry, rather from the recollection of what had pleased the author in others, than what had been suggested by his own imagination; but nevertheless I thought they contained passages of noble promise."

I need hardly transcribe the well-known lines—

> "Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
> The golden-crested haughty Marmion,—"

down to

> "For this we spurn Apollo's venal son,
> And bid a long 'good night to Marmion,—'"

with his lordship's note on the last line—"Good night to Marmion, the pathetic and also prophetic exclamation of Henry Blount, Esquire, on the death of honest Marmion."—But it may entertain my readers to compare the style in which Scott alludes to Byron's assault in the preface of 1830 with that of one of his contemporary letters on the subject. Addressing (August 7, 1809) the gentleman in whose behalf he had been interceding with Mr. Canning, he says—

> "By the way, is the ancient ****, whose decease is to open our quest, thinking of a better world? I only ask because about three years ago I accepted the office I hold in the Court of Session, the revenue to accrue to me only on the death of the old incumbent. But my friend has since taken out a new lease of life, and unless I

get some Border lad to cut his throat, may, for aught I know, live as long as I shall;—such odious deceivers are these invalids. Mine reminds me of Sindbad's Old Man of the Sea, and will certainly throttle me if I can't somehow dismount him. If I were once in possession of my reversionary income, I would, like you, bid farewell to the drudgery of literature, and do nothing but what I pleased, which might be another phrase for doing very little. I was always an admirer of the modest wish of a retainer in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays—

'I would not be a serving man
  To carry the cloak-bag still,
Nor would I be a falconer,
  The greedy hawks to fill;
But I would live in a good house,
  And have a good master too,
And I would eat and drink of the best,
  And *no* work would I do.'

In the mean time, it is funny enough to see a whelp of a young Lord Byron abusing me, of whose circumstances he knows nothing, for endeavouring to scratch out a living with my pen. God help the bear if, having little else to eat, he must not even suck his own paws. I can assure the noble imp of fame it is not my fault that I was not born to a park and £5000 a-year, as it is not his lordship's merit, although it may be his great good fortune, that he was not born to live by his literary talents or success. Adieu, my dear friend. I shall be impatient to hear how your matters fadge."

This gentleman's affairs are again alluded to in a letter to Ellis, dated Ashestiel, September 14:—

"I do not write to whet a purpose that is not blunted, but to express my anxious wishes that your kind endeavours may succeed while it is called *to-day*, for, by all tokens, it will soon be *yesterday* with this Ministry. And they will deserve it, for crossing, jostling, and hampering the measures of the only man among them fit to be intrusted with the salvation of the country. The spring-tide may, for aught I know, break in this next session of Parliament. There is an evil fate upon us in all we do at home and abroad, else why should the Conqueror of Talavera be retreating from the field of his glory at a moment when, by all reasonable calculation, he should have been the soul and mover of a combined army of 150,000 English, Spaniards, and Portuguese? And why should Gifford employ himself at home in the thriftless exercise of correction, as if Mercury, instead of stretching to a race himself, were to amuse himself with starting a bedrid cripple, and making a pair of crutches for him with his own hand? Much might have been done, and may yet be done; but we are not yet in the right way. Is there no one among you who can throw a Congreve rocket among the gerunds and supines of that model of pedants, Dr. Philopatris Parr? I understand your foreign lingos too little to attempt it, but pretty things might be said upon the memorable tureen which he begged of Lord Somebody, whom he afterwards wished to prove to be mad. For example, I would adopt some of the leading phrases of *independent, high-souled, contentus parvo*, and so forth, with which he is bespattered in the Edinburgh, and declare it *our* opinion, that, if indulged with the three wishes of Prior's tale, he would answer, like the heroine Corisca—

'A ladle to my silver dish
Is all I want, is all I wish.'

I did *not* review Miss Edgeworth, nor do I think it all well done; at least, it falls below my opinion of that lady's merits. Indeed, I have contributed nothing to the last Review, and am, therefore, according to all rules, the more entitled to criticise it freely. The conclusion of the article on Sir John Moore is transcendently written; and I think I can venture to say, '*aut Erasmus, aut Diabolus.*' Your sugar-cake is very far from being a heavy *bon-bon;* but there I think we stop. The Missionaries, though very good, is on a subject rather stale, and much of the rest is absolute wading.

"As an excuse for my own indolence, I have been in the Highlands for some time past; and who should I meet there, of all fowls in the air, but your friend Mr. Blackburn, to whom I was so much obliged for the care he took of my late unfortunate relative, at your friendly request. The recognition was unfortunately made just when I was leaving the country, and as he was in a gig, and I on the driving-seat of a carriage, the place of meeting a narrow Highland road, which looked as if forty patent ploughs had furrowed it, we had not time or space for so long a greeting as we could have wished. He has a capital good house on the banks of the Leven, about three miles below its discharge from the lake, and very near the classical spot where Matthew Bramble and his whole family were conducted by Smollett, and where Smollett himself was born. There is a new inducement for you to come to Caledon. Your health, thank God, is now no impediment; and I am told sugar and rum excel even whisky, so your purse must be proportionally distended."

The unfortunate brother, the blot of the family, to whom Scott alludes in this letter, had disappointed all the hopes under which his friends sent him to Jamaica. It may be remarked, as characteristic of Scott at this time, that in the various letters to Ellis concerning Daniel, he speaks of him as his *relation*, never as his *brother;* and it must also be mentioned as a circumstance suggesting that Daniel had retained, after all, some sense of pride, that his West Indian patron was allowed by himself to remain, to the end of their connexion, in ignorance of what his distinguished brother had thus thought fit to suppress. Mr. Blackburn, in fact, never knew that Daniel was Walter Scott's brother, until he was applied to for some information respecting him on my own behalf, after this narrative was begun. The story is shortly, that the adventurer's habits of dissipation proved incurable; but he finally left Jamaica under a stigma which Walter Scott regarded with utter severity. Being employed in some service against a refractory or insurgent body of negroes, he had exhibited a lamentable deficiency of spirit and conduct. He returned to Scotland a dishonoured man; and though he found shelter and compassion from his mother, his brother would never see him again. Nay, when soon after, his health, shattered by dissolute indulgence, and probably the intolerable load of shame, gave way altogether, and he died as yet a young man, the poet refused either to attend his funeral or to wear mourning for him like the rest of the family. Thus sternly, when in the height and pride of his blood, could Scott, whose heart was never hardened against the distress of an enemy, recoil from the disgrace of a brother. It is a more pleasing part of my duty to add, that he spoke to me, twenty years afterwards, in terms of great and painful contrition for the austerity with which he had conducted himself on this occasion. I must add, moreover, that he took a warm interest in a natural child whom Daniel had bequeathed to his mother's care; and after the old lady's death, religiously supplied her place as the boy's protector.

About this time the edition of Sir Ralph Sadler's State Papers, &c. (3 vols. royal 4to) was at length completed by Scott, and published by Constable; but the letters which passed between the Editor and the bookseller show that their personal estrangement had as yet undergone slender alteration. The collection of the Sadler papers was chiefly the work of Mr. Arthur Clifford—but Scott drew up the Memoir and Notes, and superintended the printing. His account of the Life of

Sadler* extends to thirty pages; and both it and his notes are written with all that lively solicitude about points of antiquarian detail, which accompanied him through so many tasks less attractive than the personal career of a distinguished statesman intimately connected with the fortunes of Mary Queen of Scots. Some volumes of the edition of Somers's Tracts (which he had undertaken for Mr. Miller and other booksellers of London two or three years before) were also published about the same period; but that compilation was not finished (13 vols. royal 4to) until 1812. His part in it (for which the booksellers paid him 1300 guineas) was diligently performed, and shows abundant traces of his sagacious understanding and graceful expression. His editorial labours on Dryden, Swift, and these other collections, were gradually storing his mind with that minute and accurate knowledge of the leading persons and events both of Scotch and English history, which made his conversation on such subjects that of one who had rather lived with than read about the departed; while, unlike other antiquaries, he always preserved the keenest interest in the transactions of his own time.

The reader has seen that during his stay in London in the spring of this year, Scott became strongly impressed with a suspicion that the Duke of Portland's Cabinet could not much longer hold together; and the letters which have been quoted, when considered along with the actual course of subsequent events, can leave little doubt that he had gathered this impression from the tone of Mr. Canning's private conversation as to the recent management of the War Department by Lord Castlereagh. It is now known that, as early as Easter, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs had informed the head of the Government that, unless the Secretary for War and the Colonies were replaced by a more competent person, he himself must withdraw from the Ministry; that the Duke of Portland and the majority of the Cabinet concurred in the necessity of Lord Castlereagh's removal, but pressed Mr. Canning to allow the matter to lie over until the conclusion of the Parliamentary Session; that Mr. Canning, reluctantly agreeing to this delay, continued to sit for some months in the same Cabinet with the colleague whose eventual dismissal had been conceded to his representation; and that when, on the 20th of September, the Duke of Portland at length informed him of Mr. Canning's resolution, with the date of its original communication to his Grace and the other Ministers, Lord Castlereagh tendered his resignation, and wrote the same day to Mr. Canning, reproaching him with double dealing.

> "Having," he said, "pronounced it unfit that I should remain charged with the conduct of the war, and made my situation as a Minister of the Crown dependent on your will and pleasure, you continued to sit in the same Cabinet with me, and leave me not only in the persuasion that I possessed your confidence and support as a colleague, but allowed me, in breach of every principle of good faith, both public and private, to originate and proceed in the execution of a new enterprise of the most arduous and important nature (the Walcheren Expedition) with your apparent concurrence and ostensible approbation. You were fully aware that, if my situation in the government had been disclosed to me, I could not have submit-

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* Republished in the Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. iv.

ted to remain one moment in office, without the entire abandonment of my private honour and public duty. You knew I was deceived, and you continued to deceive me."

The result was a duel on the morning of the 21st, in which Mr. Canning was attended by Mr. Charles Ellis (now Lord Seaford) as his second. Mr. Canning, at the second fire, was severely wounded in the thigh, while his antagonist had a narrow escape, a button on the lapel of his coat having been shot off. In consequence of this quarrel, both Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning retired from office; their example was followed by the Duke of Portland himself; and after fruitless negotiations with Lords Grey and Grenville, Mr. Percival became First Lord of the Treasury, as well as Chancellor of the Exchequer; while the Marquis Wellesley took the Seals of the Foreign Department, and Lord Liverpool removed from the Home Office to that which Lord Castlereagh had occupied. There were some other changes, but Scott's friend, Mr. R. Dundas (now Lord Melville), remained in his place at the head of the Board of Control.

While the public mind was occupied with the duel and its yet uncertain results, Scott wrote as follows to the nearest relation and most intimate friend of Mr. Canning's second:—

To George Ellis, Esq.

"Ashestiel, Sept. 26, 1809.

"My dear Ellis,

"Your letter gave me great pleasure, especially the outside, for Canning's frank assured me that his wound was at least not materially serious. So for once the envelope of your letter was even more welcome than the contents. That harebrained Irishman's letter carries absurdity upon the face of it, for surely he would have had much more reason for personal animosity had Canning made the matter public, against the wishes of his uncle and every other person concerned, than for his consenting, at their request, that it should remain a secret, and leaving it to them to make such communication to Lord C. as they should think proper, and *when* they should think proper. I am ill situated here for the explanations I would wish to give, but I have forwarded copies of the letters to Lord Dalkeith, a high-spirited and independent young nobleman, in whose opinion Mr. Canning would, I think, wish to stand well. I have also taken some measures to prevent the good folks of Edinburgh from running after any straw that may be thrown into the wind. I wrote a very hurried note to Mr. C. Ellis the instant I *saw* the accident in the papers, not knowing exactly where you might be, and trusting he would excuse my extreme anxiety and solicitude upon the occasion.

"I see, among other reports, that my friend, Robert Dundas, is mentioned as Secretary at War. I confess I shall be both vexed and disappointed if he, of whose talents and opinions I think very highly, should be prevailed on to embark in so patched and crazy a vessel as can now be lashed together, and that upon a sea which promises to be sufficiently boisterous. My own hopes of every kind are as low as the heels of my boots, and methinks I would say to any friend of mine as Tybalt says to Benvolio—'What! art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?' I suppose the Doctor will be *move* the first, and then the Whigs will come in like a land-flood, and lay the country at the feet of Buonaparte for peace. This, if his devil does not fail, he will readily patch up, and send a few hundred thousands among our coach-driving noblesse, and perhaps among our Princes of the Blood. With the influence acquired by such *gages d'amitié*, and by ostentatious hospitality at his court to all those idiots who will forget the rat-trap of the *detenus*, and crowd there for novelty, there will be, in the course of five or six years, what we have never yet seen, a real French party in this country. To this you are to add all the Burdettites, men who, rather than want combustibles, will fetch brimstone from hell. It is not these whom I fear, however,—it is the vile and degrading spirit of *egoisme* so prevalent among the higher ranks, especially among the highest. God forgive me if I do them injustice, but I think champagne duty free would go a great way to seduce some of them; and is it not a strong symptom when people, knowing and feeling their own weakness, will, from mere selfishness and pride, suffer the vessel to drive on the shelves rather than she should be saved by the only pilot capable of the task? I will be much obliged to you to let me know what is likely to be done—whether any fight can yet be made, or if all is over. Lord Melville had been furious for some time against this Administration—I think *he* will hardly lend a hand to clear the wreck. I should think, if Marquis Wellesley returns, he might form a steady Administration, but God wot he must condemn most of the present rotten planks before he can lay down the new vessel. Above all, let me know how Canning's recovery goes on. We must think what is to be done about the Review. Ever yours truly, W. S."

Scott's views as to the transactions of this period, and the principal parties concerned in them, were considerably altered by the observation of subsequent years; but I have been much interested with watching the course of his sentiments and opinions on such subjects; and, in the belief that others may feel in the same way with myself, I shall insert, without comment, some further extracts from this correspondence:

To the same.

"Ashestiel, Nov. 3, 1809.

"My dear Ellis,

"I had your letter some time ago, which gave me less comfort in the present public emergency than your letters usually do. Frankly, I see great doubts, not to say an impossibility, of Canning's attaining that rank among the Opposition which will enable him to command the use of their shoulders to place him where—you cannot be more convinced than I am—he is entitled to stand. The *condottieri* of the Grenvilles,—for they have no political principles, and therefore no political party, detached from their immense influence over individuals—will hardly be seduced from their standard to that of Canning, by an eloquence which has been exerted upon them in vain, even when they might have hoped to be gainers by listening to it. The *soi-disant* Whigs stick together like burs. The ragged regiment of Burdett and Folkstone is under yet stricter discipline, for you may have observed that no lover was ever so jealous of his mistress as Sir Francis is of his mob popularity—witness the fate of Paull, Tierney, even Wardle; in short, of whomsoever presumed to rival the brazen image whom the mob of Westminster has set up. That either, or both of these parties, will be delighted with the accession of our friend's wisdom and eloquence, cannot for a moment be disputed. That the Grenvilles, in particular, did he only propose to himself a slice of the great pudding, would allow him to help himself where the plums lie thickest, cannot be doubted. But I think it is very doubtful whether they, closely banded and confident of triumph as they at present are, will accept of a colleague upon terms which would make him a master; and unless Canning has these, it appears to me that *we* (the Republic) should be no better than if he had retained his office in the present, or rather late, Administration. But how far, in throwing himself altogether into the arms of Opposition at this crisis, Canning will injure himself with the large and sound party who profess *Pittism*, is, I really think, worthy of consideration. The influence of his name is at present as great as you or I could wish it; but those who wish to undermine it, want but, according to our Scottish proverb, 'a hair to make a tether of.' I admit his hand is very difficult to play, and much as I love and admire him, I am most interested because it is the decided interest of his country, that he should pique, repique, and capot his antagonists. But you know much of the delicacy of the game lies in *discarding*—so I hope he will be in no hurry on throwing out his cards.

"I am the more anxious on this score, because I feel an internal conviction that neither Marquis Wellesley nor Lord Melville will lend their names to bolster out this rump of an Administration. Symptoms of this are said to have transpired in Scotland, but in this retirement I cannot learn upon what authority. Should this prove so, I confess my best wishes would be realized, because I cannot see how Percival could avoid surrendering at discretion, and taking, perhaps, a peerage. We should then have an Administration *à la Pitt*, which is a much better thing than an Opposition, however conducted or headed, which, like a wave of the sea, forms indeed but a single body when it is rolling towards the shore, but dashes into foam and dispersion the instant it reaches its object. Should Canning and the above named noble peers come to understand each other, joined to all among the present Ministry whom their native good sense, and an attachment to good warm places, will lead to hear reason, it does seem to me that we might form a deeper front to the enemy than we have presented since the death of Pitt, or rather since the dissolution of his first Administration. But if this be a dream, as it may very probably be, I still hope Canning will take his own ground in Parliament, and hoist his own standard. Sooner or later it must be successful. So much for politics—about which, after all, my neighbours the *black-cocks* know about as much as I do.

"I have a great deal to write you about a new poem which I have on the anvil —also, upon the melancholy death of a favourite greyhound bitch—rest her body, since I dare not say soul! She was of high blood and excellent promise. Should any of your sporting friends have a whelp to spare, of a good kind, and of the female sex, I would be grateful beyond measure, especially if she has had the distemper. As I have quite laid aside the gun, coursing is my only and constant amusement, and my valued pair of four-legged champions, Douglas and Percy, wax old and *unfeary*. Ever yours truly,

W. S."

To Walter Scott Esq.

"Gloucester Lodge, Nov. 13, 1809.

"My dear Sir,

"I am very sensibly gratified by your kind expressions, whether of condolence or congratulation, and I acknowledge, if not (with your Highland writer) the synonymousness of the two terms, at least the union of the two sentiments, as applied to my present circumstances. I am not so heroically fond of being *out* (*quàtenus out*), as not to consider that a matter of condolence. But I am at the same time sufficiently convinced of the desirableness of not being *in*, when one should be *in* to no purpose, either of public advantage or personal credit, to be satisfied that on that ground I am entitled to your congratulations.

"I should be very happy indeed to look forward, with the prospect of being able to realize it, to the trip to Scotland which you suggest to me; and still more to the visit included therein, which, as you hold it out, would not be the least part of my temptation. Of this, however, I hope we shall have opportunities of talking before the season arrives; for I reckon upon your spring visit to London, and think of it, I assure you, with great pleasure, as likely to happen at a period when I shall have it more in my power than I have had on any former occasion to enjoy the advantage of it. You will find me not in quite so romantic a scene of seclusion and tranquillity here as that which you describe—but very tranquil and secluded nevertheless, at a mile and a half's distance from Hyde Park Corner—a distance considerable enough, as I now am, to save me from any very overwhelming 'unda salutantium.'

"Here, or any where else, I beg you to believe in the very sincere satisfaction which I shall derive from your society, and which I do derive from the assurance of your regard and good opinion. Ever, my dear sir, very truly and faithfully yours, GEO. CANNING.

"P. S.—I expect, in the course of this week, to send you a copy of a more ample statement of the circumstances of my retirement, which the misrepresentations of some who, I *think*, must have known they were misrepresenting (though *that* I must not say), have rendered necessary."

I could not quote more largely from these political letters without trespassing against the feelings of distinguished individuals still alive.

I believe the extracts which I have given are sufficient to illustrate the sagacity with which Scott had at that early period apprehended the dangers to which the political career of Mr. Canning was exposed, by the jealousy of the old Tory aristocracy on the one hand, and the insidious flatteries of Whig intriguers on the other. Even in communications which he must have known would pass under Mr. Canning's own eye, I think we may trace something of the lurking suspicion, that a propensity to tamper with intrigue might eventually develope itself in that great statesman's otherwise noble character. In after years he certainly expressed himself concerning the quarrel of 1809 as if, on a cool retrospect, he considered the "harebrained Irishman" to have been much more sinned against than sinning; but his original impressions on this point had of course been modified by the subsequent lives of the two antagonists—as, indeed, his correspondence will be found to confess. I willingly turn from Scott's politics to some other matters, which about this time occupied a large share of his thoughts.

He had from his boyish days a great love for theatrical representation; and so soon as circumstances enabled him to practise extended hospitality, the chief actors of his time, whenever they happened to be in Scotland, were among the most acceptable of his guests. Mr. Charles Young was, I believe, the first of them of whom he saw much: as early as 1803, I find him writing of that gentleman to the Marchioness of Abercorn as a valuable addition to the society of Edinburgh; and down to the end of Scott's life, Mr. Young was never in the north without visiting him.

Another graceful and intelligent performer in whom he took a special interest, and of whom he saw a great deal in his private circle, was Miss Smith, afterwards Mrs. Bartley. But at the period of which I am now treating, his principal theatrical intimacy was with John Philip Kemble, and his sister, Mrs. Siddons, both of whom he appears to have often met at Lord Abercorn's villa near Stanmore, during his spring visits to London after the first establishment of his poetical celebrity. Of John Kemble's personal character and manners, he has recorded his impressions in a pleasing reviewal of Mr. Boaden's Memoir.* The great tragedian's love of black-letter learning, especially of dramatic antiquities, afforded a strong bond of fellowship; and I have heard Scott say that the only man who ever seduced him into very deep potations in his middle life was Kemble. He was frequently at Ashestiel, and the "fat Scotch butler," whom Mr. Skene has described to us, by name *John Macbeth*, made sore complaints of the bad hours kept on such occasions in one of the most regular of households; but the watchings of the night were not more grievous to "Cousin Macbeth," as Kemble called the honest *beauffetier*, than were the hazards and fatigues of the morning to the representative of the Scotch usurper. Kemble's miseries during a rough gallop were quite as grotesque as those of his namesake, and it must be owned that species of distress was one from the contemplation of which his host could never derive any thing but amusement.

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* *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xx.

I have heard Scott chuckle with particular glee over the recollection of an excursion to the vale of the Ettrick, near which river the party were pursued by a bull. "Come, King John," said he, "we must even take the water," and accordingly he and his daughter plunged into the stream. But King John, halting on the bank and surveying the river, which happened to be full and turbid, exclaimed, in his usual solemn manner,

——"The flood is angry, Sheriff,
Methinks I'll get me up into a tree." *

It was well that the dogs had succeeded in diverting the bull, because there was no tree at hand which could have sustained King John, nor, had that been otherwise, could so stately a personage have dismounted and ascended with such alacrity as circumstances would have required. He at length followed his friends through the river with the rueful dignity of Don Quixote.

It was this intercourse which led Scott to exert himself very strenuously, when some change in the administration of the Edinburgh stage became necessary—(I believe in 1808),—to prevail on Mr. Henry Siddons, the nephew of Kemble, to undertake the lease and management. Such an arrangement would, he expected, induce both Kemble and his sister to be more in Scotland than hitherto; and what he had seen of young Siddons himself led him to prognosticate a great improvement in the whole conduct of the northern stage. His wishes were at length accomplished in the summer of 1809. On this occasion he purchased a share, and became one of the acting trustees for the general body of proprietors: and thenceforth, during a long series of years, he continued to take a very lively concern in the proceedings of the Edinburgh company. In this he was plentifully encouraged by his domestic *camarilla;* for his wife had all a Frenchwoman's passion for the *spectacle;* and the elder of the two Ballantynes (both equally devoted to the company of players) was a regular newspaper critic of theatrical affairs, and in that capacity had already attained a measure of authority supremely gratifying to himself.

The first new play produced by Henry Siddons was the Family Legend of Joanna Baillie. This was, I believe, the first of her dramas that ever underwent the test of representation in her native kingdom; and Scott appears to have exerted himself most indefatigably in its behalf. He was consulted about all the *minutiæ* of costume, attended every rehearsal, and supplied the prologue. The play was better received than any other which the gifted authoress has since subjected to the same experiment; and how ardently Scott enjoyed its success will appear from a few specimens of the many letters which he addressed to his friend on the occasion.

The first of these letters is dated Edinburgh, October 27, 1809. He had gone into town for the purpose of entering his eldest boy at the High School:—

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* John Kemble's most familiar table-talk often flowed into blank verse; and so indeed did his sister's. Scott (who was a capital mimic) often repeated her tragic exclamation to a footboy during a dinner at Ashestiel,

"You've brought me water, boy,—I asked for beer."

"On receiving your long kind letter yesterday, I sought out Siddons, who was equally surprised and delighted at your liberal arrangement about the Lady of the Rock. I will put all the names to rights, and retain enough of locality and personality to please the antiquary, without the least risk of bringing the clan Gillian about our ears. I went through the theatre, which is the most complete little thing of the kind I ever saw, elegantly fitted up, and large enough for every purpose. I trust, with you, that in this as in other cases, our Scotch poverty may be a counterbalance to our Scotch pride, and that we shall not need in my time a larger or more expensive building. Siddons himself observes, that even for the purposes of show (so paramount nowadays) a moderate stage is better fitted than a large one, because the machinery is pliable and manageable in proportion to its size. With regard to the equipment of the Family Legend, I have been much diverted with a discovery which I have made. I had occasion to visit our Lord Provost (by profession a stocking-weaver),* and was surprised to find the worthy Magistrate filled with a new-born zeal for the drama. He spoke of Mr. Siddons' merits with enthusiasm, and of Miss Baillie's powers almost with tears of rapture. Being a curious investigator of cause and effect, I never rested until I found out that this theatric rage which had seized his lordship of a sudden, was owing to a large order for hose, pantaloons, and plaids for equipping the rival clans of Campbell and Maclean, and which Siddons was sensible enough to send to the warehouse of our excellent provost. . . . . The Laird† is just gone to the High School, and it is with inexpressible feeling that I hear him trying to babble the first words of Latin, the signal of commencing serious study, for his acquirements hitherto have been under the mild dominion of a governess. I felt very like Leontes—

"Looking on the lines
Of my boy's face, methought I did recall
Thirty good years"—

And O my dear Miss Baillie, what a tale thirty years can tell even in an uniform and unhazardous course of life! How much I have reaped that I have never sown, and sown that I have never reaped! Always, I shall think it one of the proudest and happiest circumstances of my life that enables me to subscribe myself your faithful and affectionate friend,

W. S."

Three months later he thus communicates the result of the experiment.

To Miss Joanna Baillie—Hampstead.

"Jan. 30th, 1810.

"My dear Miss Baillie,

"You have only to imagine all that you could wish to give success to a play, and your conceptions will still fall short of the complete and decided triumph of the Family Legend. The house was crowded to a most extraordinary degree; many people had come from your native capital of the west; every thing that pretended to distinction, whether from rank or literature, was in the boxes, and in the pit such an aggregate mass of humanity as I have seldom if ever witnessed in the same space. It was quite obvious from the beginning, that the cause was to be very fairly tried before the public, and that if any thing went wrong, no effort, even of your numerous and zealous friends, could have had much influence in guiding or restraining the general feeling. Some good-natured persons had been kind enough to propagate reports of a strong opposition, which, though I considered them as totally groundless, did not by any means lessen the extreme anxiety with which I waited the rise of the curtain. But in a short time I saw there was no ground whatever for apprehension, and yet I sat the whole time shaking for fear a scene-shifter, or a carpenter, or some of the subaltern actors should make some blunder, and interrupt the feeling of deep and general interest which soon seized on the whole pit, box, and gallery, as Mr. Bayes has it. The scene on the rock struck the utmost possible effect into the audience, and you heard nothing but sobs on all sides. The banquet scene was equally impressive, and so was the combat. Of the greater scenes, that between Lorn and Helen in the castle of Maclean, that between Helen and her lover, and the examination of Maclean himself in Argyle's castle, were applauded to the very echo. Siddons announced the play '*for the rest of the week*,' which was received not only with a thunder of applause, but with cheering and throwing up of hats and handkerchiefs. Mrs. Siddons supported her part incomparably, although just recovered from the indisposition mentioned in my last. Siddons himself played Lorn very well indeed, and moved and looked with great spirit. A Mr. Terry, who promises to be a fine performer, went through the part of the Old Earl with great taste and effect. For the rest I cannot say much, excepting that from highest to lowest they were most accurately perfect in their parts, and did their very best. Malcolm de Grey was tolerable but *stickish*—Maclean came off decently—but the conspirators were sad hounds. You are, my dear Miss Baillie, too much of a democrat in your writings; you allow life, soul, and spirit to these inferior creatures of the drama, and expect they will be the better of it. Now it was obvious to me, that the poor monsters, whose mouths are only of use to spout the vapid blank verse which your modern playwright puts into the part of the confidant and subaltern villain of his piece, did not know what to make of the energetic and poetical diction which even these subordinate departments abound with in the Legend. As the play greatly exceeded the usual length (lasting till half-past ten), we intend, when it is repeated to-night, to omit some of the passages where the weight necessarily fell on the weakest of our host, although we may hereby injure the detail of the plot. The scenery was very good, and the rock, without appearance of pantomime, was so contrived as to place Mrs. Siddons in a very precarious situation to all appearance. The dresses were more tawdry than I should have judged proper, but expensive and showy. I got my brother John's Highland recruiting party to reinforce the garrison of Inverary, and as they mustered beneath the porch of the castle, and seemed to fill the court-yard behind, the combat scene had really the appearance of reality. Siddons has been most attentive, anxious, assiduous, and docile, and had drilled his troops so well that the prompter's aid was unnecessary, and I do not believe he gave a single hint the whole night; nor were there any false or ridiculous accents or gestures even among the underlings, though God knows they fell often far short of the true spirit. Mrs. Siddons spoke the epilogue* extremely well: the prologue,† which I will send you in its revised state, was also very well received. Mrs. Scott sends her kindest compliments of congratulation; she had a party of thirty friends in one small box, which she was obliged to watch like a clucking hen till she had gathered her whole flock, for the crowd was insufferable. I am going to see the Legend to-night, when I shall enjoy it quietly, for last night I was so much interested in its reception that I cannot say I was at leisure to attend to the feelings arising from the representation itself. People are dying to read it. If you think of suffering a single edition to be printed to gratify their curiosity, I will take care of it. But I do not advise this, because until printed no other theatres can have it before you give leave. My kind respects attend Miss Agnes Baillie, and believe me ever your obliged and faithful servant,

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* This magistrate was Mr. William Coulter, who died in office in April, 1810, and is said to have been greatly consoled on his deathbed by the prospect of so grand a funeral as must needs occur in the case of an actual Lord Provost of Auld Reekie. Scott used to *take him off* as saying at some public meeting, "Gentlemen, though doomed to the trade of a stocking-weaver, I was born with the soul of a *Sheepio!*"—(Scipio.)

† Young Walter Scott was called Gilnockie, the Laird of Gilnockie, or simply *the Laird*, in consequence of his childish admiration for Johnnie Armstrong, whose ruined tower is still extant at Gilnockie on the Esk, nearly opposite Netherby.

WALTER SCOTT."

"P. S. A friend of mine writes dramatic criticisms now and then. I have begged him to send me a copy of the Edinburgh paper in which he inserts his lucubrations, and I will transmit it to you: he is a play-going man, and more in the

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* Written by Henry Mackenzie.

† See Scott's Poetical Works, vol. viii. p. 387.

habit of expressing himself on such subjects than most people.—In case you have not got a playbill, I will enclose one, because I think in my own case I should like to see it."

The Family Legend had a continuous run of fourteen nights, and was soon afterwards printed and published by the Ballantynes.

The theatrical critic alluded to in the last of these letters was the elder of those brothers; the newspaper in which his lucubrations then appeared was the *Edinburgh Evening Courant;* and so it continued until 1817, when the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* was purchased by the printing company in the Canongate; ever after which period it was edited by the prominent member of that firm, and from time to time was the vehicle of many fugitive pieces by the unseen partner.

In one of these letters there occurs, for the first time, the name of a person who soon obtained a large share of Scott's regard and confidence—the late ingenious comedian, Mr. Daniel Terry. He had received a good education, and been regularly trained as an architect; but abandoned that profession, at an early period of life, for the stage, and was now beginning to attract attention as a valuable and efficient actor in Henry Siddons's new company at Edinburgh. Already he and the Ballantynes were constant companions, and through his familiarity with them, Scott had abundant opportunities of appreciating his many excellent and agreeable qualities. He had the manners and feelings of a gentleman. Like John Kemble, he was deeply skilled in the old literature of the drama, and he rivalled Scott's own enthusiasm for the antiquities of *vertu.* Their epistolary correspondence in after days was frequent, and will supply me with many illustrations of Scott's minor tastes and habits. As their letters lie before me, they appear as if they had all been penned by the same hand. Terry's idolatry of his new friend induced him to imitate his writing so zealously, that Scott used to say, if he were called on to swear to any document, the utmost he could venture to attest would be, that it was either in his own hand or in Terry's. The actor, perhaps unconsciously, mimicked him in other matters with hardly inferior pertinacity. His small lively features had acquired, before I knew him, a truly ludicrous cast of Scott's graver expression; he had taught his tiny eyebrow the very trick of the poet's meditative frown; and, to crown all, he so habitually affected his tone and accent that, though a native of Bath, a stranger could hardly have doubted he must be a Scotchman. These things afforded Scott and all their mutual acquaintances much diversion; but perhaps no Stoic could have helped being secretly gratified by seeing a clever and sensible man convert himself into a living type and symbol of admiration.

Charles Mathews and Terry were once thrown out of a gig together, and the former received an injury which made him halt ever afterwards, while the latter escaped unhurt. "Dooms, *Dauniel,*" said Mathews, when they next met, "what a pity that it wasna your luck to get the game leg, mon! Your *Shirra* wad hae been the very thing, ye ken, an' ye wad hae been croose till ye war coffined!" Terry, though he did not always relish bantering on this subject, replied readily and good-humouredly by a quotation from Peter Pindar's *Bozzy and Piozzi:*—

"When Foote his leg by some misfortune broke,
Says I to Johnson, all by way of joke,
Sam, sir, in Paragraph will soon be clever,
He'll take off Peter better now than ever."

Mathews's mirthful caricature of Terry's sober mimicry of Scott was one of the richest extravaganzas of his social hours; but indeed I have often seen this Proteus dramatize the whole Ballantyne group with equal success—while Rigdumfunnidos screamed with delight, and Aldiborontiphoscophornio faintly chuckled, and the Sheriff, gently smiling, pushed round his decanters.

Miss Seward died in March, 1809. She bequeathed her poetry to Scott, with an injunction to publish it speedily, and prefix a sketch of her life; while she made her letters (of which she had kept copies) the property of Mr. Constable, in the assurance that due regard for his own interests would forthwith place the whole collection before the admiring world. Scott superintended accordingly the edition of the lady's verses, which was published in three volumes in August, 1810, by John Ballantyne & Co.; and Constable lost no time in announcing her correspondence, which appeared a year later, in six volumes. The following letter alludes to these productions, as well as a comedy, by Mr. Henry Siddons, which he had recently brought out on the Edinburgh stage; and lastly, to the Lady of the Lake, the printing of which had, by this time, made great progress.

To Miss Joanna Baillie.

"Edinburgh, March 18, 1810.

"Nothing, my dear Miss Baillie, can loiter in my hands, when you are commanding officer. I have put the play in progress through the press, and find my publishers, the Ballantynes, had previously determined to make Mr. Longman, the proprietor of your other works, the offer of this. All that can be made of it in such a cause certainly shall, and the booksellers shall be content with as little profit as can in reason be expected. I understand the trade well, and will take care of this. Indeed, I believe the honour weighs more with the booksellers here than the profit of a single play. So much for business. You are quite right in the risk I run of failure in a third poem; yet I think I understand the British public well enough to set every sail towards the popular breeze. One set of folks pique themselves upon sailing in the wind's eye—another class drive right before it; now I would neither do one or t'other, but endeavour to go, as the sailors express it, *upon* a wind, and make use of it to carry me my own way, instead of going precisely in its direction; or, to speak in a dialect with which I am more familiar, I would endeavour to make my horse carry me, instead of attempting to carry my horse. I have a vain-glorious presentiment of success upon this occasion, which may very well deceive me, but which I would hardly confess to any body but you, nor perhaps to you neither, unless I knew you would find it out whether I told it you or no,—

"You are a sharp observer, and you look
Quite through the eyes of men.

"I plead guilty to the charge of ill-breeding to Miss ***. The despair which I used to feel on receiving poor Miss Seward's letters, whom I really liked, gave me a most unsentimental horror for sentimental letters. The crossest thing I ever did in my life was to poor, dear Miss Seward; she wrote me in an evil hour (I had never seen her, mark that!) a long and most passionate epistle upon the death of a dear friend, whom I had never seen neither, concluding with a charge not to attempt answering the said letter, for she was dead to the world, &c. &c. &c. Never were commands more literally obeyed. I remained as silent as the grave, till the lady made so many inquiries after me, that I was afraid of my death being prematurely announced by a sonnet or an elegy. When I did see her, however, she interested me very much, and I am now doing penance for my ill-breeding, by submitting to edite her posthumous poetry, most of which is absolutely execrable. This, however, is the least of my evils, for when she proposed this bequest to me, which I could not in decency refuse, she combined it with a request that I would publish her whole literary correspondence. This I declined on principle, having a particular aversion at perpetuating that sort of gossip;—but what availed it? Lo! to ensure the publication, she left it to an Edinburgh bookseller; and I anticipate the horror of seeing myself advertised for a live poet on a painted streamer, for I understand all her friends are depicted therein in body, mind, and manners. So much for the risks of sentimental correspondence.

"Siddons' play was truly flat, but not unprofitable; he contrived to get it well propped in the acting, and—though it was such a thing as if you or I had written it (supposing, that is, what in your case, and I think even in my own, is impossible) would have been damned seventy fold,—yet it went through with applause. Such is the humour of the multitude; and they will quarrel with venison for being dressed a day sooner than fashion requires, and batten on a neck of mutton, because, on the whole, it is rather better than they expected; however, Siddons is a good lad, and deserves success, through whatever channel it comes. His mother is here just now. I was quite shocked to see her, for the last two years have made a dreadful inroad both in voice and person; she has, however, a very bad cold. I hope she will be able to act Jane de Montfort, which we have long planned. Very truly yours,
W. S."

CHAPTER XX.

AFFAIR OF THOMAS SCOTT'S EXTRACTORSHIP DISCUSSED IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS—SPEECHES OF LORD LAUDERDALE—LORD MELVILLE, &c.—LORD HOLLAND AT THE FRIDAY CLUB—PUBLICATION OF THE LADY OF THE LAKE—CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING VERSIFICATION WITH ELLIS AND CANNING—THE POEM CRITICISED BY JEFFREY AND MACKINTOSH—LETTERS TO SOUTHEY AND MORRITT—ANECDOTES FROM JAMES BALLANTYNE'S MEMORANDA.—1810.

THERE occurred, while the latter cantos of the Lady of the Lake were advancing through the press, an affair which gave Scott so much uneasiness, that I must not pass it in silence. Each Clerk of Session had in those days the charge of a particular office or department in the Great Register House of Scotland; and the appointment of the subalterns, who therein recorded and extracted the decrees of the Supreme Court, was in his hands. Some of these situations, remunerated according to a fixed rate of fees, by the parties concerned in the suits before the Court, were valuable, and considered not at all below the pretensions of gentlemen who had been regularly trained for the higher branches of the law. About the time when Thomas Scott's affairs as a Writer to the Signet fell into derangement, but before they were yet hopeless, a post became vacant in his brother's office, which yielded an average income of £400, and which he would very willingly have accepted. The poet, however, considered a respectable man, who had grown grey at an inferior desk in the same department, as entitled to promotion, and exerted the right of patronage in his favour accordingly, bestowing on his brother the place which this person left. It was worth about £250 a-year, and its duties being entirely mechanical, might be in great part, and often had been in former times entirely, discharged by deputy. Mr. Thomas Scott's appointment to this Ex-

tractorship took place at an early stage of the proceedings of that Commission for enquiring into the Scotch System of Judicature, which had the poet for its secretary. Thomas, very soon afterwards, was compelled to withdraw from Edinburgh, and retired, as has been mentioned, to the Isle of Man, leaving his official duties to the care of a substitute, who was to allow him a certain share of the fees, until circumstances should permit his return. It was not, however, found so easy, as he and his friends had anticipated, to wind up his accounts, and settle with his creditors. Time passed on, and being an active man, in the prime vigour of life, he accepted a commission in the Manx Fencibles, a new corps raised by the Lord of that island, the Duke of Athol, who willingly availed himself of the military experience which Mr. Scott had acquired in the course of his long connexion with the Edinburgh Volunteers. These Manx Fencibles, however, were soon dissolved, and Thomas Scott, now engaged in the peaceful occupation of collecting materials for a History of the Isle of Man, to which his brother had strongly directed his views, was anxiously expecting a final arrangement, which might allow him to re-establish himself in Edinburgh, and resume his seat in the Register House, when he received the intelligence that the Commission of Judicature had resolved to abolish that, among many other similar posts. This was a severe blow; but it was announced, at the same time, that the Commission meant to recommend to Parliament a scheme of compensation for the functionaries who were to be discharged at their suggestion, and that his retired allowance would probably amount to £130 per annum.

In the spring of 1810, the Commission gave in its report, and was dissolved; and a bill, embodying the details of an extensive reform, founded on its suggestions, was laid before the House of Commons, who adopted most of its provisions, and among others passed, without hesitation, the clauses respecting compensation for the holders of abolished offices. But when the bill reached the House of Lords, several of these clauses were severely reprobated by some Peers of the Whig party, and the case of Thomas Scott, in particular, was represented as a gross and flagrant *job*. The following extract from Hansard's Debates will save me the trouble of further details:—

"THOMAS SCOTT.

"THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE moved an amendment, 'that those only be remunerated who were mentioned in the schedule.' The application of this amendment was towards the compensation intended for Mr. Thomas Scott, the brother of Walter Scott. It appeared the former was appointed to the office of an Extractor at a time when it must have been foreseen that those offices would be abolished. Mr. Thomas Scott had not been connected previously with that sort of situation, but was recruiting for the Manx Fencibles in the Isle of Man at the time, and had not served the office, but performed its duties through the means of a deputy. He considered this transaction a perfect job. By the present bill, Mr. T. Scott would have £130 for life as an indemnity for an office, the duties of which he never had performed, while those clerks who had laboured for twenty years had no adequate remuneration.

"VISCOUNT MELVILLE supported the general provisions of the bill. With respect to Mr. T. Scott, he certainly had been in business, had met with misfortunes, and on account of his circumstances went to the Isle of Man; but with respect to his appointment, this was the fact; a situation in the same office [of the Register House] with that of his brother, of £400, became vacant, and he [Walter Scott] thought it his duty to promote a person who had meritoriously filled the situation which was afterwards granted to Mr. T. Scott. His brother was therefore so disinterested as to have appointed him to the inferior instead of the superior situation. The noble viscount saw no injustice in the case, and there was no partiality but what was excusable.

"LORD HOLLAND thought no man who knew him would suspect that he was unfavourable to men of literature; on the contrary, he felt a great esteem for the literary character of Walter Scott. He and his colleagues ever thought it their duty to reward literary merit without regard to political opinions; and he wished he could pay the same compliment to the noble and learned viscount, for he must ever recollect that the poet Burns, of immortal memory, had been shamefully neglected. But with respect to Mr. Thomas Scott, the question was quite different, for he was placed in a situation which he and his brother knew at the time would be abolished; and from Parliament he claimed an indemnity for what could not be pronounced any loss. It was unjust as regarded others, and improper as it respected Parliament.

"The amendment was then proposed and negatived. The bill was accordingly read the third time and passed."—HANSARD, *June*, 1810.

I shall now extract various passages from Scott's letters to his brother and other friends, which will show what his feelings were while this affair continued under agitation.

To Thomas Scott, Esq., Douglas, Isle of Man.

"Edinburgh, 25th May, 1810.

"My dear Tom,

"I write under some anxiety for your interest, though I sincerely hope it is groundless. The devil or James Gibson* has put it into Lord Lauderdale's head to challenge your annuity in the House of Lords on account of your non-residence, and your holding a commission in the militia. His lordship kept his intention as secret as possible, but fortunately it reached the kind and friendly ear of Colin Mackenzie. Lord Melville takes the matter up stoutly, and I have little doubt will carry his point, unless the whole bill is given up for the season, which some concurring opposition from different quarters renders not impossible. In that case, you must, at the expense of a little cash and time, show face in Edinburgh for a week or two and attend your office. But I devoutly hope all will be settled by the bill being passed as it now stands. This is truly a most unworthy exertion of private spite and malice, but I trust it will be in vain."

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"Edinburgh, June 12th.

"Dear Tom,

"I have the pleasure to acquaint you that I have every reason to believe that the bill will pass this week. It has been *committed;* upon which occasion Lord Lauderdale stated various objections, all of which were repelled. He then adverted to your case with some sufficiently bitter observations. Lord Melville advised him to reserve his epithets till he was pleased to state his cause, as he would pledge himself to show that they were totally inapplicable to the transaction. The Duke of Montrose also intimated his intention to defend it, which I take very kind of his Grace, as he went down on purpose, and declared his resolution to attend whenever the business should be stirred. So much for

'The Lord of Graham, by every chief adored,
Who boasts his native philabeg restored.' "†

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* James Gibson, Esq. W.S. (now Sir James Gibson Craig of Riccarton, Bart.), had always been regarded as one of the most able and active of the Scotch Whigs—whose acknowledged chief in those days was the Earl of Lauderdale.

† These lines are slightly altered from the Rolliad, p. 308. The Duke had obtained the repeal of an act of Parliament forbidding the use of the Highland garb.

"Edinburgh, 21st June, 1810.

"My dear Tom,

"The bill was read a third time in the House of Lords, on which occasion Lord Lauderdale made his attack, which Lord Melville answered. There was not much said on either side: Lord Holland supported Lord Lauderdale, and the bill passed without a division. So you have fairly doubled Cape Lauderdale. I believe his principal view was to insult my feelings, in which he has been very unsuccessful, for I thank God I feel nothing but the most hearty contempt both for the attack and the sort of paltry malice by which alone it could be dictated."

The next letter is addressed to an old friend of Scott's, who, though a stout Whig, had taken a lively interest in the success of his brother's parliamentary business.

To John Richardson, Esq., Fludger Street, Westminster.

"Edinburgh, 3d July, 1810.

"My dear Richardson,

"I ought before now to have written you my particular thanks for your kind attention to the interest which I came so strangely and unexpectedly to have in the passing of the Judicature Bill. The only purpose which I suppose Lord Lauderdale had in view was to state charges which could neither be understood nor refuted, and to give me a little pain by dragging my brother's misfortunes into public notice. If the last was his aim, I am happy to say it has most absolutely miscarried, for I have too much contempt for the motive which dictated his Lordship's eloquence to feel much for its thunders. My brother loses by the bill from £150 to £200, which no power short of an act of Parliament could have taken from him, and far from having a view to the compensation, he is a considerable loser by its being substituted for the actual receipts of his office. I assure you I am very sensible of your kind and friendly activity and zeal in my brother's behalf.

"I received the Guerras* safe; it is a fine copy, and I think very cheap, considering how difficult it is now to procure foreign books. I shall be delighted to have the Traité des Tournois. I propose, on the 12th, setting forth for the West Highlands, with the desperate purpose of investigating the caves of Staffa, Egg, and Skye. There was a time when this was a heroic undertaking, and when the return of Samuel Johnson from achieving it was hailed by the Edinburgh literati with, 'per varios casus,' and other scraps of classical gratulation equally new and elegant. But the harvest of glory has been entirely reaped by the early discoverers; and in an age when every London citizen makes Lochlomond his wash-pot, and throws his shoe over Ben-Nevis, a man may endure every hardship and expose himself to every danger of the Highland seas, from sea-sickness to the jaws of the great sea-snake, without gaining a single leaf of laurel for his pains.

"The best apology for bestowing all this tediousness upon you is, that John Burnet is dinning into the ears of the Court a botheration about the politics of the magnificent city of Culross. But I will release you sooner than I fear I shall escape myself, with the assurance that I am ever yours most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

I conclude the affair of Thomas Scott with a brief extract from a letter which his brother addressed to him a few weeks later:—"Lord Holland has been in Edinburgh, and we met accidentally at a public party. He made up to me, but I remembered his part in your affair, and *cut* him with as little remorse as an old pen." The meeting here alluded to occurred at a dinner of the *Friday Club*, at Fortune's Tavern, to which Lord Holland was introduced by Mr. Thomas Thomson. Two gentlemen who were present, inform me that they distinctly remember a very painful scene, for which, knowing Scott's habitual good-nature and urbanity, they had been wholly unprepared. One of them (Lord Jeffrey) adds, that this was the only example of rudeness he ever witnessed in him in the course of a lifelong familiarity. I have thought it due to truth and justice not to omit this disagreeable passage in Scott's life, which shows how even his mind could at times be unhinged and perverted by the malign influence of political spleen. It is consolatory to add, that he enjoyed much agreeable intercourse in after days with Lord Holland, and retained no feelings of resentment towards any other of the Whig gentlemen named in the preceding correspondence.[*]

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* A copy of the *Guerras Civiles de Granada.*

While these disagreeable affairs were still in progress, the poem of the Lady of the Lake was completed. Scott was at the same time arranging the materials, and superintending the printing, of the collection entitled "English Minstrelsy," in which several of his own minor poems first appeared, and which John Ballantyne and Co. also published in the summer of 1810. The Swift, too, (to say nothing of reviews and the like), was going on; and so was the Somers. A new edition of the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border was moreover at press, and in it the editor included a few features of novelty, particularly Mr. Morritt's spirited ballad of the *Curse of Moy*. He gives a lively description of his occupations in the following letter addressed to that gentleman:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., 24 Portland Place, London.

"Edinburgh, 2d March, 1810.

"My dear Morritt,

"You are very good to remember such a false knave as I am, who have omitted so long to thank you for a letter, bringing me the assurances of your health and remembrance, which I do not value the less deeply and sincerely for my seeming neglect. Truth is, I do not eat the bread of idleness. But I was born a

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[*] I subjoin a list of the Members of *The Friday Club*, which was instituted in June 1803 (on the model, I believe, of Johnson's at the Turk's Head), down to the period of Scott's death. The others marked, like his name, by an asterisk, are also dead.

1803 *Sir James Hall
*Professor Dugald Stewart
*Professor John Playfair
Rev. Arch. Alison
Rev. Sidney Smith
*Rev. Peter Elmslie
*Alex. Irving (Lord Newton
*Wm. Erskine (Lord Kinnedder)
George Cranstoun (Lord Corehouse)
*Walter Scott
Thomas Thomson
Dr. John Thomson
John A. Murray (Lord Advocate in 1835)
Henry Brougham (Lord Brougham)
*Henry Mackenzie
H. Mackenzie (Lord Mackenzie)
*Malcolm Laing
Henry Cockburn (Lord Cockburn)
John Richardson
Francis Jeffrey (Lord Jeffrey)
William Clerk
1804 *Alex. Hamilton
*Dr. Coventry
*Professor John Robison
George Strickland
*Professor Dalzell
*Lord Webb Seymour
*Earl of Selkirk
*Lord Glenbervie
1807 Rev. John Thomson
1810 John Jeffrey
1811 T. F. Kennedy
J. Fullerton (Lord Fullerton)
John Allen
*Francis Horner
Thomas Campbell
1812 *George Wilson
1814 *Dr. John Gordon
1816 Andrew Rutherford
1817 James Keay
1825 Leonard Horner
Professor Pillans
1826 Count M. de Flahault
*D. Cathcart (Lord Alloway)
1827 Earl of Minto
William Murray
1830 Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone

Scotchman, and a bare one, and was therefore born to fight my way with my left hand where my right failed me, and with my teeth, if they were both cut off. This is but a bad apology for not answering your kindness, yet not so bad when you consider that it was only admitted as a cause of procrastination, and that I have been—let me see—I have been Secretary to the Judicature Commission, which sat daily during all the Christmas vacation. I have been editing Swift, and correcting the press, at the rate of six sheets a-week. I have been editing Somers at the rate of four ditto ditto. I have written reviews—I have written songs—I have made selections—I have superintended rehearsals—and all this independent of visiting, and of my official duty, which occupies me four hours every working day except Mondays—and independent of a new poem with which I am threatening the world. This last employment is not the most prudent, but I really cannot well help myself. My office, though a very good one for Scotland, is only held in reversion; nor do I at present derive a shilling from it. I must expect that a fresh favourite of the public will supersede me, and my philosophy being very great on the point of poetical fame, I would fain, at the risk of hastening my own downfall, avail myself of the favourable moment to make some further provision for my little people. Moreover, I cannot otherwise honestly indulge myself in some of the luxuries, which, when long gratified, become a sort of pseudo necessaries. As for the terrible parodies* which have come forth, I can only say with Benedict, 'A college of such witmongers cannot flout me out of my humour.' Had I been conscious of one place about my temper, were it even, metaphorically speaking, the tip of my heel, vulnerable to this sort of aggression, I have that respect for mine own ease, that I would have shunned being a candidate for public applause, as I would avoid snatching a honey-comb from among a hive of live bees. My present attempt is a poem, partly Highland—the scene Loch Katrine, *tempore Jacobi quinti.* If I fail, as Lady Macbeth gallantly says, I fail, and there is only a story murdered to no purpose; and if I succeed, why then, as the song says—

'Up with the bonnie blue bonnet,
The dirk and the feather and a'.'

"I hope to show this ditty to you soon in Portland Place, for it seems determined I must go to London, though the time is not fixed. The pleasure of meeting you and half a dozen other friends, reconciles me to this change of plan, for had I answered your letter the day I received it, I would have said nothing was less likely than my going to town in spring. I hope it will be so late as to afford me an opportunity of visiting Rokeby and Greta Side on my return. The *felon sow* herself could not think of them with more affection than I do; and though I love Portland Place dearly, yet I would fain enjoy both. But this must be as *the Fates and destinies and Sisters three* determine. Charlotte hopes to accompany me, and is particularly gratified by the expectation of meeting Mrs. Morritt. We think of our sunny days at Rokeby with equal delight.

"Miss Baillie's play went off capitally here, notwithstanding her fond and over-credulous belief in a Creator of the world. The fact is so generally believed that it is man who makes the deity, that I am surprised it has never been maintained as a corollary, that the knife and fork make the fingers. We wept till our hearts were sore, and applauded till our hands were blistered—what could we more—and this in crowded theatres.

"I send a copy of the poetical collection, not for you, my good friend, because you would not pay your literary subscription,† but for Mrs. Morritt. I thought of leaving it as I came through Yorkshire, but as I can get *as yet* an office frank, it will be safer in your charge. By a parity of reasoning, you will receive a copy of the new edition of the Minstrelsy just finished, and about to be shipped, enriched with your Curse of Moy, which is very much admired by all to whom I have shown it. I am sorry that dear —— —— is so far from you. There is something about her that makes me think of her with a mixture of affection and anxiety—such a pure and excellent heart, joined to such native and fascinating manners, cannot pass unprotected through your fashionable scenes without much hazard of a twinge at least, if not a stab. I remember we talked over this subject once while riding on the banks of Tees, and somehow (I cannot tell why) it falls like a death-bell on my ear. She is too artless for the people that she has to live amongst. This is all vile croaking, so I will end it by begging ten times love and compliments to Mrs. Morritt, in which Charlotte heartily joins. Believe me ever, dear Morritt, yours most faithfully,

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* I suppose this is an allusion to the "Lay of the Scotch Fiddle," "the Goblin Groom," and some other productions, like them, long since forgotten.

† Scott alludes to some translations of Italian poetry which he had wished for Mr. Morritt's permission to publish in the "English Minstrelsy."

WALTER SCOTT"

Early in May, the Lady of the Lake came out—as her two elder sisters had done—in all the majesty of quarto, with every accompanying grace of typography, and with, moreover, an engraved frontispiece of Saxon's portrait of Scott; the price of the book, two guineas. For the copyright the poet had nominally received 2000 guineas, but as John Ballantyne and Co. retained three fourths of the property to themselves (Miller of London purchasing the other fourth), the author's profits were, or should have been, more than this.

It ought to be mentioned, that during the progress of the poem his feelings towards Constable were so much softened, that he authorized John Ballantyne to ask, in his name, that experienced bookseller's advice respecting the amount of the first impression, the method of advertising, and other professional details. Mr. Constable readily gave the assistance thus requested, and would willingly have taken any share they pleased in the adventure. The property had been disposed of before these communications occurred, and the triumphant success of the *coup d'essai* of the new firm was sufficient to close Scott's ears for a season against any propositions of the like kind from the house at the Cross; but from this time there was no return of any thing like personal ill-will between the parties. One article of this correspondence will be sufficient.

To Mr. Constable.

"Castle Street, 13th March, 1810.

"Dear Sir,

"I am sure if Mr. Hunter is really sorry for the occasion of my long absence from your shop, I shall be happy to forget all disagreeable circumstances, and visit it often as a customer and amateur. I think it necessary to add (before departing from this subject, and I hope for ever), that it is not in my power to restore our relative situation as author and publishers, because, upon the breach between us, a large capital was diverted by the Ballantynes from another object, and invested in their present bookselling concern, under an express assurance from me of such support as my future publications could give them; which is a pledge not to be withdrawn without grounds which I cannot anticipate. But this is not a consideration which need prevent our being friends and well-wishers. Yours truly,

W. SCOTT."

Mr. Robert Cadell, the publisher of this Memoir, who was then a young man in training for his profession in Edinburgh, retains a strong impression of the interest which the Lady of the Lake excited there for two or three months before it was published.

"James Ballantyne," he says, "read the cantos from time to time to select coteries, as they advanced at press. Common fame was loud in their favour; a great poem was on all hands anticipated. I do not recollect that any of all the author's works was ever looked for with more intense anxiety, or that any one of them excited a more extraordinary sensation when it did appear. The whole country rang with the praises of the poet—crowds set off to view the scenery of Loch Katrine, till then comparatively unknown; and as the book came out just before the season for excursions, every house and inn in that neighbourhood was crammed with a constant succession of visitors. It is a well-ascertained fact, that from the date of the publication of the Lady of the Lake the post-horse duty in Scotland rose in an extraordinary degree, and indeed it continued to do so regularly for a number of years, the author's succeeding works keeping up the enthusiasm for our scenery which he had thus originally created."

I owe to the same correspondent the following details:

"The quarto edition of 2050 copies disappeared instantly, and was followed in the course of the same year by four editions in octavo, viz. one of 3000, a second of 3250, and a third and a fourth each of 6000 copies; thus, in the space of a few months, the extraordinary number of 20,000 copies were disposed of. In the next year (1811) there was another edition of 3000; there was one of 2000 in 1814; another of 2000 in 1815; one of 2000 again in 1819; and two, making between them 2500, appeared in 1825: since which time the Lady of the Lake, in collective editions of his poetry, and in separate issues, must have circulated to the extent of at least 20,000 copies more."

So that, down to the month of July, 1836, the legitimate sale in Great Britain has been not less than 50,000 copies.

I have little to add to what the Introduction of 1830, and some letters already extracted have told us, concerning the history of the composition of this poem. Indeed the coincidences of expression and illustration in the Introduction and those private letters, written twenty years before, are remarkable.. In both we find him quoting Montrose's lines, and in both he quotes also "Up wi' the bonnie blue bonnet," &c. In truth, both letters and Introduction were literal transcripts of his usual conversation on the subject.

"A lady," he says, "to whom I was nearly related, and with whom I lived during her whole life on the most brotherly terms of affection, was residing with me (at Ashestiel) when the work was in progress, and used to ask me what I could possibly do to rise so early in the morning. At last I told her the subject of my meditations; and I can never forget the anxiety and affection expressed in her reply. 'Do not be so rash,' she said, 'my dearest cousin. You are already popular—more so perhaps than you yourself will believe, or than even I or other partial friends can fairly allow to your merit. You stand high—do not rashly attempt to climb higher and incur the risk of a fall; for, depend upon it, a favourite will not be permitted to stumble with impunity.' I replied to this affectionate expostulation in the words of Montrose:

'He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who dares not put it to the touch,
To win or lose it all.'

'If I fail,' I said—for the dialogue is strong in my recollection, 'it is a sign that I ought never to have succeeded, and *I will write prose for life*: you shall see no change in my temper, nor will I eat a single meal the worse. But if I succeed—

'Up wi' the bonnie blue bonnet,
The dirk and the feather an' a'!'

"Afterwards I showed my critic the first canto, which reconciled her to my imprudence."

The lady here alluded to was no doubt Miss Christian Rutherford, his mother's sister, who, as I have already mentioned, was so little above his age, that they seem always to have lived together on terms of equality indicated in her use of the word "cousin" in the dialogue before us. She was, however, about as devout a Shakspearian as her nephew, and the use of *cousin*, for kinsman in general, is common to all our elder dramatists.*

He says, in the same essay,—

"I remember that about the same time a friend started in to 'heeze up my hope,' like the minstrel in the old song. He was bred a farmer, but a man of powerful understanding, natural good taste, and warm poetical feeling, perfectly competent to supply the wants of an imperfect or irregular education. He was a passionate admirer of field sports, which we often pursued together. As this friend happened to dine with me at Ashestiel one day, I took the opportunity of reading to him the first canto of the Lady of the Lake, in order to ascertain the effect the poem was likely to produce upon a person who was but too favourable a representative of readers at large. His reception of my recitation, or prelection, was rather singular. He placed his hand across his brow, and listened with great attention through the whole account of the stag-hunt, till the dogs throw themselves into the lake to follow their master, who embarks with Ellen Douglas. He then started up with a sudden exclamation, struck his hand on the table, and declared in a voice of censure calculated for the occasion, that the dogs must have been totally ruined by being permitted to take the water after such a severe chase. I own I was much encouraged by the species of reverie which had possessed so zealous a follower of the sports of the ancient Nimrod, who had been completely surprised out of all doubts of the reality of the tale."

Scott adds—

"Another of his remarks gave me less pleasure. He detected the identity of the king with the wandering knight, Fitz-James, when he winds his bugle to summon his attendants. He was probably thinking of the lively but somewhat licentious old ballad in which the *dénoument* of a royal intrigue" [one of James V. himself by the way] "takes place as follows:—

'He took a bugle from his side,
  He blew both loud and shrill,
And four-and-twenty belted knights
  Came skipping owre the hill.

'Then he took out a little knife,
  Let a' his duddies fa',
And he was the bravest gentleman
  That was amang them a'.
    And we'll go no more a roving,' &c.

"This discovery, as Mr. Pepys says of the rent in his camlet cloak, 'was but a trifle, yet it troubled me;' and I was at a good deal of pains to efface any marks by which I thought my secret could be traced before the conclusion, when I relied on it with the same hope of producing effect with which the Irish postboy is said to reserve a 'trot for the avenue.' "†

I believe the shrewd critic here introduced was the poet's excellent cousin, Charles Scott, now laird of Knowe-south. The story of the Irish postilion's trot he owed to Mr. Moore.

In their reception of this poem, the critics were for once in full harmony with each other, and with the popular voice. The article in the Quarterly was written by George Ellis; but its eulogies, though less discriminative, are not a whit more emphatic than those of Mr. Jeffrey in the rival Review. Indeed, I have always considered this last paper as the best specimen of contemporary criticism on Scott's poetry; and I shall therefore indulge myself with quoting here two of its paragraphs:—

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* Thus Lady Capulet exclaims on seeing the corpse of Tybalt,
"Tybalt, my cousin! oh! my brother's child!"

† Introduction to the Lady of the Lake—1830.

"There is nothing in Mr. Scott of the severe and majestic style of Milton—or of the terse and fine composition of Pope—or of the elaborate elegance and melody of Campbell—or even of the flowing and redundant diction of Southey,—but there is a medley of bright images and glowing, set carelessly and loosely together—a diction tinged successively with the careless richness of Shakspeare, the harshness and antique simplicity of the old romances, the homeliness of vulgar ballads and anecdotes, and the sentimental glitter of the most modern poetry—passing from the borders of the ludicrous to those of the sublime—alternately minute and energetic—sometimes artificial, and frequently negligent, but always full of spirit and vivacity—abounding in images that are striking at first sight to minds of every contexture—and never expressing a sentiment which it can cost the most ordinary reader any exertion to comprehend. Upon the whole, we are inclined to think more highly of the Lady of the Lake than of either of the author's former publications. We are more sure, however, that it has fewer faults, than that it has greater beauties; and as its beauties bear a stronger resemblance to those with which the public has been already made familiar in these celebrated works, we should not be surprised if its popularity were less splendid and remarkable. For our own parts, however, we are of opinion, that it will be oftener read hereafter than either of them; and that if it had appeared first in the series, their reception would have been less favourable than that which it has experienced. It is more polished in its diction, and more regular in its versification; the story is constructed with infinitely more skill and address; there is a greater proportion of pleasing and tender passages, with much less antiquarian detail; and, upon the whole, a larger variety of characters, more artfully and judiciously contrasted. There is nothing so fine, perhaps, as the battle in Marmion—or so picturesque as some of the scattered sketches in the Lay; but there is a richness and a spirit in the whole piece which does not pervade either of those poems—a profusion of incident, and a shifting brilliancy of colouring, that reminds us of the witchery of Ariosto—and a constant elasticity, and occasional energy, which seem to belong more particularly to the author now before us."

"It is honourable to Mr. Scott's genius that he has been able to interest the public so deeply with this third presentment of the same chivalrous scenes; but we cannot help thinking, that both his glory and our gratification would have been greater, if he had changed his hand more completely, and actually given us a true Celtic story, with all its drapery and accompaniments, in a corresponding style of decoration. Such a subject, we are persuaded, has very great capabilities, and only wants to be introduced to public notice by such a hand as Mr. Scott's, to make a still more powerful impression than he has already effected by the resurrection of the tales of romance. There are few persons, we believe, in any degree of poetical susceptibility, who have wandered among the secluded valleys of the Highlands, and contemplated the singular people by whom they are still tenanted—with their love of music and of song—their hardy and irregular life, so unlike the unvarying toils of the Saxon mechanic—their devotion to their chiefs—their wild and lofty traditions—their national enthusiasm—the melancholy grandeur of the scenes they inhabit—and the multiplied superstitions which still linger among them—without feeling that there is no existing people so well adapted for the purposes of poetry, or so capable of furnishing the occasions of new and striking inventions.

"We are persuaded that if Mr. Scott's powerful and creative genius were to be turned in good earnest to such a subject, something might be produced still more impressive and original than even this age has yet witnessed." *

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* It may interest the reader to compare with this passage a brief extract from Sir James Mackintosh's Indian Diary of 1811:—

"The subject of The Lady," says he, "is a common Highland irruption, but at a point where the neighbourhood of the Lowlands affords the best contrast of manners—where the scenery affords the noblest subject of description—and where the wild clan is so near to

The second of these paragraphs is a strikingly prophetic one; and if the details already given negative the prediction of the first,—namely, that the immediate popularity of the Lady of the Lake would be less remarkable than that of the Lay or Marmion had been—its other prediction, that the new poem would be "oftener read hereafter than either of the former," has, I believe, proved just. The Lay, if I may venture to state the creed now established, is, I should say, generally considered as the most natural and original, Marmion the most powerful and splendid, the Lady of the Lake as the most interesting, romantic, picturesque, and graceful of his great poems.

Of the private opinions expressed at the time of its first publication by his distinguished literary friends, and expressed with an ease and candour equally honourable to them and to him, that of Mr. Southey was, as far as I know, the only one which called forth any thing like a critical reply; and even here, *more suo*, he seems glad to turn from his own productions to those of his correspondent. It will be seen that Mr. Southey had recently put forth the first volume of his history of Brazil; that his Kehama was then in the Ballantyne press; and that he had mentioned to Scott his purpose of writing another poem under the title of "Don Pelayo"—which in the issue was exchanged for that of "Roderick the Last of the Goths."

To Robert Southey, Esq., Durham.

"Edinburgh, May 20, 1810.

"My dear Southey,

"I am very sensible of the value of your kind approbation of my efforts, and trust I shall, under such good auspices, keep my ground with the public. I have studied their taste as much as a thing so variable can be calculated upon, and I hope I have again given them an acceptable subject of entertainment. What you say of the songs is very just, and also of the measure. But, on the one hand, I wished to make a difference between my former poems and this new attempt, in the general tenor of versification, and on the other, having an eye to the benefits derivable from the change of stanza, I omitted no opportunity which could be given or taken, of converting my dog-trot into a hop-step-and-jump. I am impatient to see Kehama; James Ballantyne, who has a good deal of tact, speaks very highly of the poetical fire and beauty which pervades it; and, considering the success of Sir William Jones, I should think the Hindhu mythology would not revolt the common readers, for in that lies your only danger. As for Don Pelayo, it should be exquisite under your management; the subject is noble, the parties finely contrasted in manners, dress, religion, and all that the poet desires to bring into action; and your complete knowledge of every historian who has touched upon the period, promises the reader at once delight and instruction.

"Twenty times twenty thanks for the History of Brazil, which has been my amusement, and solace, and spring of instruction for this month past. I have always made it my reading-book after dinner, between the removal of the cloth and our early tea-time. There is only one defect I can point out, and that applies to the publishers—I mean the want of a good map. For, to tell you the truth, with my imperfect atlas of South America, I can hardly trace these same *Tups* of yours (which in our border dialect signifies *rams*), with all their divisions and subdivisions, throughout so many ramifications, without a *carte de pays*. The history itself is

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the Court, that their robberies can be connected with the romantic adventures of a disguised king, an exiled lord, and a high-born beauty. The whole narrative is very fine. There are not so many splendid passages for quotation as in the two former poems. This may indeed silence the objections of the critics, but I doubt whether it will promote the popularity of the poem. It has nothing so good as the Address to Scotland, or the Death of Marmion."—*Life of Mackintosh*, vol. ii. p. 82.

most singularly entertaining, and throws new light upon a subject which we have hitherto understood very imperfectly. Your labour must have been immense, to judge from the number of curious facts quoted, and unheard-of authorities which you have collected. I have traced the achievements of the Portuguese adventurers with greater interest than I remember to have felt since, when a school-boy, I first perused the duodecimo collection of Voyages and Discoveries called the World Displayed—a sensation which I thought had been long dead within me; for, to say the truth, the philanthropic and cautious conduct of modern discoverers, though far more amiable, is less entertaining than that of the old Buccaneers, and Spaniards and Portuguese, who went to conquer and achieve adventures, and met with strange chances of fate in consequence, which could never have befallen a well-armed boat's crew, not trusting themselves beyond their watering-place, or trading with the natives on the principles of mercantile good faith.

"I have some thoughts of a journey and voyage to the Hebrides this year, but if I don't make that out, I think I shall make a foray into your northern counties, go to see my friend Morritt at Greta Bridge, and certainly cast myself Keswick-ways either going or coming. I have some literary projects to talk over with you, for the re-editing some of our ancient classical romances and poetry, and so forth. I have great command of our friends the Ballantynes, and I think, so far as the filthy lucre of gain is concerned, I could make a very advantageous bargain for the time which must necessarily be bestowed in such a labour, besides doing an agreeable thing for ourselves, and a useful service to literature. What is become of Coleridge's *Friend?* I hope he had a letter from me, enclosing my trifling subscription. How does our friend Wordsworth? I won't write to him, because he hates letter-writing as much as I do; but I often think of him, and always with affection. If you make any stay at Durham let me know, as I wish you to know my friend Surtees of Mainsforth.* He is an excellent antiquary, some of the rust of which study has clung to his manners; but he is good-hearted, and you would make the *summer eve* (for so by the courtesy of the kalendar we must call these abominable easterly blighting afternoons) short between you. I presume you are with my friend Dr. Southey, who, I hope, has not quite forgotten me, in which faith I beg kind compliments to him, and am ever yours most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

George Ellis having undertaken, at Gifford's request, to review the Lady of the Lake, does not appear to have addressed any letter to the poet upon the subject, until after his article had appeared. He then says simply, that he had therein expressed his candid sentiments, and hoped his friend, as great a worshipper as himself of Dryden's tales, would take in good part his remarks on the octosyllabic metre as applied to serious continued narrative. The following was Scott's reply:—

To G. Ellis, Esq.

"My dear Ellis,

"I have been scandalously lazy in answering your kind epistle, received I don't know how long since; but then I had been long your creditor, and I fancy correspondents, like merchants, are often glad to plead their friends' neglect of their accompt-current as an apology for their own, especially when they know that the value of the payments being adjusted, must leave a sad balance against them. I have run up an attempt on the Curse of Kehama for the Quarterly; a strange thing it is—the Curse, I mean—and the critique is not, as the blackguards say, worth a damn; but what I could I did, which was to throw as much weight as possible upon the beautiful passages, of which there are many, and to slur over the absurdities, of which there are not a few. It is infinite pity of Southey, with genius almost to exuberance, so much learning and real good feeling of poetry, that, with the true obstinacy of a foolish papa, he *will* be most attached to the defects of his poetical offspring. This said Kehama affords cruel openings for the quizzers, and I suppose will get it roundly in the Edinburgh Review. I would have made a very different hand of it indeed, had the order of the day been *pour déchirer.*[*]

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* This amiable gentleman, author of the History of Durham, in three volumes folio,—one of the most learned as well as most interesting works of its class,—was an early and dear friend of Scott's. He died at the family seat of Mainsforth, near Durham, 11th February 1834, in his 55th year.

"I told you how much I was delighted with your critique on the Lady; but, very likely moved by the same feeling for which I have just censured Southey, I am still inclined to defend the eight-syllable stanza, which I have somehow persuaded myself is more congenial to the English language—more favourable to narrative poetry at least—than that which has been commonly termed heroic verse. If you will take the trouble to read a page of Pope's Iliad, you will probably find a good many lines out of which two syllables may be struck without injury to the sense. The first lines of this translation have been repeatedly noticed as capable of being cut down from ships of the line into frigates, by striking out the two said-syllabled words, as—

'Achilles' wrath to Greece, the *direful* spring
Of woes unnumbered, *heavenly* goddess sing,
That wrath which sent to Pluto's *gloomy* reign
The souls of *mighty* chiefs in battle slain,
Whose bones unburied on the *desert* shore,
Devouring dogs and *hungry* vultures tore.'

"Now, since it is true that by throwing out the epithets underscored, we preserve the sense without diminishing the force of the verses—and since it is also true that scarcely one of the epithets are more than merely expletive—I do really think that the structure of verse which requires least of this sort of bolstering, is most likely to be forcible and animated. The case is different in descriptive poetry, because there epithets, if they are happily selected, are rather to be sought after than avoided, and admit of being varied *ad infinitum.* But if in narrative you are frequently compelled to tag your substantives with adjectives, it must frequently happen that you are forced upon those that are merely commonplaces, such as '*heavenly* goddess,' '*desert* shore,' and so forth; and I need not tell you, that whenever any syllable is obviously inserted for the completion of a couplet, the reader is disposed to quarrel with it. Besides, the eight-syllable stanza is capable of certain varieties denied to the heroic. Double rhymes for instance, are congenial to it, which often give a sort of Gothic richness to its cadences; you may also render it more or less rapid by retaining or dropping an occasional syllable. Lastly, and which I think its principal merit, it runs better into sentences than any length of line I know, as it corresponds, upon an average view of our punctuation, very commonly with the proper and usual space between comma and comma. Lastly the Second—and which ought perhaps to have been said first,—I think I have somehow a better knack at this 'false gallop' of verse, as Touchstone calls it, than at your more legitimate hexameters; and so there is the short and long of my longs and shorts. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Mr. Ellis recurs to the octosyllabic measure of the Lady of the Lake in his next letter.

"I don't think," says he, "after all the eloquence with which you plead for your favourite metre, that you really like it from any other motive than that *sainte paresse*—that delightful indolence—which induces one to delight in doing those things which we can do with the least fatigue. If you will take the trouble of converting Dryden's Theodore and Honoria (a narrative, is it not !) into Hudibrastic measure, and after trying this on the first twenty lines you feel pleased with the transformation, I will give up the argument;—although, in point of fact, I believe that I regret the *variety* of your own old stanza, much more than the absence of that heroic measure, which you justly remark is not, without great difficulty, capable of being moulded into sentences of various lengths. When, therefore, you give us another poem, pray indulge me with rather a larger share of your ancient dithyrambics."

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[*] See this article in his Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xvii. pp. 301–337.

Canning, too, came to the side of Ellis in this debate. After telling Scott that "on a repeated perusal" he had been "more and more delighted" with the Lady of the Lake, he says—"But I *should* like to see something a little different when you write next. In short, I have sometimes thought (very presumptuously) that partly by persuasion, and partly by showing the effect of a change of dress—of a fuller and more sweeping style—upon some of your favourite passages, I could induce you to present yourself next time in a Drydenic habit. Has this ever occurred to you, and have you tried it, and not liked yourself so well?" We shall see by and by what attention Scott gave to these friendly suggestions.

Of the success of the new poem he speaks as follows in his Introduction of 1830:—

> "It was certainly so extraordinary as to induce me for the moment to conclude that I had at last fixed a nail in the proverbially inconstant wheel of Fortune. I had attained, perhaps, that degree of public reputation at which prudence, or certainly timidity, would have made a halt, and discontinued efforts by which I was far more likely to diminish my fame than to increase it. But—as the celebrated John Wilkes is said to have explained to King George the Third, that he himself, amid his full tide of popularity, was never a Wilkite—so I can with honest truth exculpate myself from having been at any time a partisan of my own poetry, even when it was in the highest fashion with the million. It must not be supposed that I was either so ungrateful, or so superabundantly candid, as to despise or scorn the value of those whose voice had elevated me so much higher than my own opinion told me I deserved. I felt, on the contrary, the more grateful to the public, as receiving that from partiality which I could not have claimed from merit; and I endeavoured to deserve the partiality by continuing such exertions as I was capable of for their amusement."

James Ballantyne has preserved in his *Memorandum* an anecdote strikingly confirmative of the most remarkable statement in this page of Scott's confessions.

> "I remember," he says, "going into his library shortly after the publication of the Lady of the Lake, and finding Miss Scott (who was then a very young girl) there by herself—I asked her—'Well, Miss Sophia, how do you like the Lady of the Lake?' Her answer was given with perfect simplicity—'Oh, I have not read it; papa says there's nothing so bad for young people as reading bad poetry.'"

In fact, his children in those days had no idea of the source of his distinction—or rather, indeed, that his position was in any respect different from that of other Advocates, Sheriffs, and Clerks of Session. The eldest boy came home one afternoon about this time from the High School, with tears and blood hardened together upon his cheeks. "Well, Wat," said his father, "what have you been fighting about today?" With that the boy blushed and hung his head, and at last stammered out—that "he had been called *a lassie*." "Indeed!" said Mrs. Scott, "this was a terrible mischief to be sure." "You may say what you please, mamma," Wat answered roughly, "but I dinna think there's a *waufer* (shabbier) thing in the world than to be a lassie, to sit boring at a clout." Upon further enquiry, it turned out that one or two of his companions had dubbed him *The Lady of the Lake*, and the phrase was to him incomprehensible, save as conveying some imputation on his prowess, which he accordingly vindicated in the usual style of the Yards. Of the poem he had never before heard. Shortly after, this story having got wind, one of Scott's colleagues of the Clerk's Table said to the boy—"Gilknockie, my man, you cannot surely help seeing that great people make more work about your papa than they do about me or any other of your *uncles*—what is it, do you suppose, that occasions this?" The little fellow pondered for a minute or two, and then answered very gravely—"It's commonly *him* that sees the hare sitting." And yet this was the man that had his children all along so very much with him. In truth, however, young Walter had guessed pretty shrewdly in the matter, for his father had all the tact of the Sutherland Highlander, whose detection of an Irish rebel up to the neck in a bog, he has commemorated in a note upon Rokeby. Like him, he was quick to catch the *sparkle* of the future victim's eye; and often said jestingly of himself, that whatever might be thought of him as a *maker* (poet), he was an excellent *trouveur*.

Ballantyne adds:—

> "One day, about this same time, when his fame was supposed to have reached its acmé, I said to him—'Will you excuse me, Mr. Scott, but I should like to ask you what you think of your own genius as a poet, in comparison with that of Burns?' He replied—'There is no comparison whatever—we ought not to be named in the same day.' 'Indeed!' I answered, 'would you compare Campbell to Burns?' 'No, James, not at all—If you wish to speak of a real poet, Joanna Baillie is now the highest genius of our country.'—But, in fact," (continues Ballantyne)—"he had often said to me that neither his own nor any modern popular style of composition was that from which he derived most pleasure. I asked him what it was. He answered—Johnson's; and that he had more pleasure in reading *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, than any other poetical composition he could mention; and I think I never saw his countenance more indicative of high admiration than while reciting aloud from those productions."*

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* In his sketch of Johnson's Life (Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. iii. p. 264) Scott says—"The deep and pathetic morality of *the Vanity of Human Wishes*, has often extracted tears from those whose eyes wander dry over pages professedly sentimental." And Lord Byron, in his Ravenna Diary (1821), has the following entry on the same subject,—'Read Johnson's Vanity of Human Wishes,—all the examples and mode of giving them sublime, as well as the latter part, with the exception of an occasional couplet. 'Tis a grand poem—and so *true!*—true as the 10th of Juvenal himself. The lapse of ages changes all things—time—language—the earth—the bounds of the sea—the stars of the sky, and every thing about, around, and underneath man, except man himself, who has always been, and always will be, an unlucky rascal. The infinite variety of lives conduct but to death, and the infinity of wishes lead but to disappointment."—(*Life and Works*, vol. v. p. 66). Yet it is the cant of our day, above all of its poetasters, that Johnson was no poet. To be sure, they say the same of Pope—and hint it occasionally even of Dryden.

CHAPTER XXI.

FIRST VISIT TO THE HEBRIDES—STAFFA—SKYE—MULL—IONA, ETC.—THE LORD OF THE ISLES PROJECTED—LETTERS TO JOANNA BAILLIE—SOUTHEY—AND MORRITT.—1810.

WALTER SCOTT was at this epoch in the highest spirits, and having strong reasons of various kinds for his resolution to avail himself of the gale of favour, only hesitated in which quarter to explore the materials of some new romance. His first and most earnest desire was to spend a few months with the British army in the Peninsula, but this he soon resigned, from an amiable motive, which a letter presently to be quoted will explain. He then thought of revisiting Rokeby—for he had, from the first day that he spent on that magnificent domain, contemplated it as the scenery of a future poem. But the burst of enthusiasm which followed the appearance of the Lady of the Lake finally swayed him to undertake a journey, deeper than he had as yet gone, into the *Highlands;* and a warm invitation from the Laird of Staffa,* a brother of his friend and colleague Mr. Macdonald Buchanan, easily induced him to add a voyage to the *Hebrides.* He was accompanied by part of his family (not forgetting his dog Wallace), and by several friends besides; among others his relation Mrs. Apreece (now Lady Davy), who had been, as he says in one of his letters, "a lioness of the first magnitude in Edinburgh," during the preceding winter. He travelled slowly, with his own horses, through Argyllshire, as far as Oban; but, indeed, even where post-horses might have been had, this was the mode he always preferred in these family excursions; for he delighted in the liberty it afforded him of alighting and lingering as often and as long as he chose: and, in truth, he often performed the far greater part of the day's journey on foot—examining the map in the morning so as to make himself master of the bearings—and following his own fancy over some old disused riding track, or along the margin of a stream, while the carriage, with its female occupants, adhered to the proper road. At Oban, where they took to the sea, Mrs. Apreece met him by appointment.

He seems to have kept no journal during this expedition; but I shall string together some letters which, with the notes that he contributed many years afterwards to Mr. Croker's Edition of Boswell, may furnish a tolerable sketch of the insular part of his progress, and of the feelings with which he first inspected the localities of his last great poem—The Lord of the Isles. The first of these letters is dated from the Hebridean residence of the young Laird of Staffa, now Sir Reginald Macdonald Steuart Seton of Staffa, Allanton, and Touch, Baronet.

To Miss Joanna Baillie.

"Ulva House, July 19, 1810.

"I cannot, my dear Miss Baillie, resist the temptation of writing to you from scenes which you have rendered classical as well as immortal. We, which in the present case means my wife, my eldest girl, and myself, are thus far in fortunate accomplishment of a pilgrimage to the Hebrides. The day before yesterday we passed the Lady's Rock, in the Sound of Mull, so near that I could almost have touched it. This is, you know, the Rock of your *Family Legend*. The boat, by my desire, went as near as prudence permitted; and I wished to have picked a relic from it, were it but a cockle-shell or a mussel, to have sent to you; but a spring tide was running with such force and velocity as to make the thing impossible. About two miles farther, we passed under the Castle of Duart, the seat of Maclean, consisting of one huge (indeed immense) square tower, in ruins, and additional turrets and castellated buildings (the work, doubtless, of Benlora's guardianship), on which the roof still moulders. It overhangs the strait channel from a lofty rock, without a single tree in the vicinity, and is surrounded by high and barren mountains, forming altogether as wild and dreary a scene as I ever beheld. Duart is confronted by the opposite castles of Dunstaffnage, Dunolly, Ardtornish, and others, all once the abodes of grim feudal chiefs, who warred incessantly with each other. I think I counted seven of these fortresses in sight at once, and heard seven times seven legends of war and wonder connected with them. We landed late, wet and cold, on the Island of Mull, near another old castle called Aros, separated, too, from our clothes, which were in a large wherry, which could not keep pace with our row-boat. Mr. Macdonald of Staffa, my kind friend and guide, had sent his piper (a constant attendant, mark that!) to rouse a Highland gentleman's family in the neighbourhood, where we were received with a profusion of kindness and hospitality. Why should I appal you with a description of our difficulties and distresses—how Charlotte lost her shoes, and little Sophia her whole collection of pebbles—how I was divorced from my razors, and the whole party looked like a Jewish sanhedrim? By this time we were accumulated as follows:—Sir George Paul, the great philanthropist, Mrs. Apreece, a distant relation of mine, Hannah Mackenzie, a daughter of our friend Henry, and Mackinnon of Mackinnon, a young gentleman, born and bred in England, but nevertheless a Highland chief.* It seems his father had acquired wealth, and this young man, who now visits the Highlands for the first time, is anxious to buy back some of the family property which was sold long since. Some twenty Mackinnons, who happened to live within hearing of our arrival (that is, I suppose, within ten miles of Aros), came posting to see their young chief, who behaved with great kindness, and propriety, and liberality. Next day we rode across the isle on Highland ponies, attended by a numerous retinue of gillies, and arrived at the head of the salt-water loch called Loch an Gaoil, where Staffa's boats awaited us with colours flying and pipes playing. We proceeded in state to this lonely isle, where our honoured lord has a very comfortable residence, and were received by a discharge of swivels and musketry from his people.

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* The reader will find a warm tribute to Staffa's character as a Highland landlord, in Scott's article on Sir John Carr's Caledonian Sketches,—Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xix.; and some spirited verses, written at his mansion of Ulva, in Scott's Poetical Works, edition 1834, vol. x., p. 356.

"Yesterday we visited Staffa and Iona: the former is one of the most extraordinary places I ever beheld. It exceeded, in my mind, every description I had heard of it; or rather, the appearance of the cavern, composed entirely of basaltic pillars as high as the roof of a cathedral,† and running deep into the rock, eternally swept by a deep and swelling sea, and paved as it were with ruddy marble, baffles all description. You can walk along the broken pillars, with some difficulty, and in some places with a little danger, as far as the farthest extremity. Boats also can come in below when the sea is placid,—which is seldom the case. I had become a sort of favourite with the Hebridean boatmen, I suppose from my anxiety about their old customs, and they were much pleased to see me get over the obstacles which stopped some of the party. So they took the whim of solemnly christening a great stone seat at the mouth of the cavern, Clachan an Bairdh, or the Poet's Stone. It was consecrated with a pibroch, which the echoes rendered tremendous, and a glass of whisky, not poured forth in the ancient mode of libation, but turned over the throats of the assistants. The head boatman, whose father had been himself a bard, made me a speech on the occasion; but as it was in Gaelic, I could only receive it as a silly beauty does a fine-spun compliment, bow, and say nothing.

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* William Alexander Mackinnon, Esq., now member of Parliament for Lymington, Hants.

† "——— that wondrous dome,
Where, as to shame the temples deck'd
By skill of earthly architect,
Nature herself, it seem'd, would raise
A minster to her Maker's praise!
Not for a meaner use ascend
Her columns, or her arches bend;
Nor of a theme less solemn tells
That mighty surge that ebbs and swells,
And still, between each awful pause
From the high vault an answer draws,
In varied tone prolonged and high,
That mocks the organ's melody.

"When this fun was over (in which, strange as it may seem, the men were quite serious,) we went to Iona, where there are some ancient and curious monuments. From this remote island the light of Christianity shone forth on Scotland and Ireland. The ruins are of a rude architecture, but curious to the antiquary. Our return was less comfortable; we had to row twenty miles against an Atlantic tide and some wind, besides the pleasure of seeing occasional squalls gathering to windward. The ladies were sick, especially poor Hannah Mackenzie, and none of the gentlemen escaped except Staffa and myself. The men, however, cheered by the pipes, and by their own interesting boat-songs, which were uncommonly wild and beautiful, one man leading and the others answering in chorus, kept pulling away without apparently the least sense of fatigue, and we reached Ulva at ten at night, tolerably wet, and well disposed for bed.

14 "Our friend Staffa is himself an excellent specimen of Highland chieftainship; he is a cadet of Clanronald, and lord of a cluster of isles on the western side of Mull, and a large estate (in extent at least) on that island. By dint of minute attention to this property, and particularly to the management of his kelp, he has at once trebled his income and doubled his population, while emigration is going on all around him. But he is very attentive to his people, who are distractedly fond of him, and has them under such regulations as conduce both to his own benefit and their profit; and keeps a certain sort of rude state and hospitality, in which they take much pride. I am quite satisfied that nothing under the personal attention of the landlord himself will satisfy a Highland tenantry, and that the substitution of factors, which is now becoming general, is one great cause of emigration. This mode of life has, however, its evils; and I can see them in this excellent man. The habit of solitary power is dangerous even to the best regulated minds, and this ardent and enthusiastic young man has not escaped the prejudices incident to his situation. But I think I have bestowed enough of my tediousness upon you. To ballast my letter, I put in one of the hallowed green pebbles from the shore of St. Columba—put it into your work-basket until we meet, when you will give me some account of its virtues. Don't suppose the lapidaries can give you any information about it, for in their profane eyes it is good for nothing. But the piper is sounding to breakfast, so no more (excepting love to Miss Agnes, Dr., and Mrs. Baillie), from your truly affectionate

Walter Scott.

"P. S.—I am told by the learned, the pebble will wear its way out of the letter, so I will keep it till I get to Edinburgh. I must not omit to mention that all through these islands I have found every person familiarly acquainted with the Family Legend, and great admirers."

It would be idle to extract many of Scott's notes on Boswell's He-

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Nor doth its entrance front in vain
To old Iona's holy fane,
That Nature's voice might seem to say,
'Well hast thou done, frail Child of clay!
Thy humble powers that stately shrine
Task'd high and hard—but witness mine!'"

Lord of the Isles, Canto IV., St. 10.

bridean Journal; but the following specimens appear too characteristic to be omitted. Of the island Inchkenneth, where Johnson was received by the head of the clan M'Lean, he says:—

"Inchkenneth is a most beautiful little islet of the most verdant green, while all the neighbouring shore of Greban, as well as the large islands of Colonsay and Ulva, are as black as heath and moss can make them. But Ulva has a good anchorage, and Inchkenneth is surrounded by shoals. It is now uninhabited. The ruins of the huts, in which Dr. Johnson was received by Sir Allan M'Lean, were still to be seen, and some tatters of the paper hangings were to be seen on the walls. Sir George Onesiphorus Paul was at Inchkenneth with the same party of which I was a member. He seemed to me to suspect many of the Highland tales which he heard, but he showed most incredulity on the subject of Johnson's having been entertained in the wretched huts of which we saw the ruins. He took me aside, and conjured me to tell him the truth of the matter. 'This Sir Allan,' said he, 'was he a *regular baronet*, or was his title such a traditional one as you find in Ireland?' I assured my excellent acquaintance that, 'for my own part, I would have paid more respect to a Knight of Kerry, or Knight of Glynn; yet Sir Allan M'Lean was a *regular baronet* by patent:' and, having given him this information, I took the liberty of asking him, in return, whether he would not in conscience prefer the worst cell in the jail at Gloucester (which he had been very active in overlooking while the building was going on), to those exposed hovels where Johnson had been entertained by rank and beauty. He looked round the little islet, and allowed Sir Allan had some advantage in exercising ground; but in other respects he thought the compulsory tenants of Gloucester had greatly the advantage. Such was his opinion of a place, concerning which Johnson has recorded that, 'it wanted little which palaces could afford.'

"Sir Allan M'Lean, like many Highland chiefs, was embarrassed in his private affairs, and exposed to unpleasant solicitations from attorneys, called, in Scotland, *Writers* (which, indeed, was the chief motive of his retiring to Inchkenneth). Upon one occasion he made a visit to a friend, then residing at Carron Lodge, on the banks of the Carron, where the banks of that river are studded with pretty villas. Sir Allan, admiring the landscape, asked his friend whom that handsome seat belonged to. 'M——, the Writer to the Signet,' was the reply. 'Umph!' said Sir Allan, but not with an accent of assent, 'I mean that other house.' 'Oh! that belongs to a very honest fellow, Jamie ——, also a Writer to the Signet.'—'Umph!' said the Highland chief of M'Lean, with more emphasis than before.—'And yon smaller house?'—'That belongs to a Stirling man; I forget his name, but I am sure he is a writer too; for'—— Sir Allan who had recoiled a quarter of a circle backward at every response, now wheeled the circle entire, and turned his back on the landscape, saying, 'My good friend, I must own you have a pretty situation here, but d—n your neighbourhood.'"

The following notices of Boswell himself, and his father, Lord Auchinleck, may be taken as literal transcripts from Scott's Table-Talk:—

"Boswell himself was callous to the *contacts* of Dr. Johnson, and when telling them, always reminds one of a jockey receiving a kick from the horse which he is showing off to a customer, and is grinning with pain while he is trying to cry out, 'Pretty rogue—no vice—all fun.' To him Johnson's rudeness was only '*pretty Fanny's way.*' Dr. Robertson had a sense of good breeding, which inclined him rather to forego the benefit of Johnson's conversation than awaken his rudeness.

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"Old Lord Auchinleck was an able lawyer, a good scholar, after the manner of Scotland, and highly valued his own advantages as a man of good estate and ancient family; and, moreover, he was a strict Presbyterian and Whig of the old Scottish cast. This did not prevent his being a terribly proud aristocrat; and great was the contempt he entertained and expressed for his son James, for the nature of his friendship, and the character of the personages of whom he was *engoué* one after another. 'There's nae hope for Jamie, mon,' he said to a friend. 'Jamie has gane clean gyte. What do you think, mon? He's done wi' Paoli—he's off wi' the landlouping scoundrel of a Corsican; and whose tail do you think he has pinned himself to now, mon?' Here the old judge summoned up a sneer of the most sovereign contempt. 'A *dominie*, mon—an auld dominie! he keeped a schule, and caud it an *acaadamy*.' Probably if this had been reported to Johnson, he would have felt it most galling, for he never much liked to think of that period of his life; it would have aggravated his dislike of Lord Auchinleck's Whiggery and Presbyterianism. These the old Lord carried to such an unusual height, that once, when a country man came in to state some justice business, and being required to make his oath, declined to do so before his Lordship, because he was not a *covenanted* magistrate. —'Is that a' your objection, mon?' said the judge; 'come your ways in here, and we'll baith of us tak' the solemn league and covenant together.' The oath was accordingly agreed and sworn to by both, and I dare say it was the last time it ever received such homage. It may be surmised how far Lord Auchinleck, such as he is here described, was likely to suit a high Tory and Episcopalian like Johnson. As they approached Auchinleck, Boswell conjured Johnson by all the ties of regard, and in requital of the services he had rendered him upon his tour, that he would spare two subjects in tenderness to his father's prejudices; the first related to Sir John Pringle, President of the Royal Society, about whom there was then some dispute current; the second concerned the general question of Whig and Tory. Sir John Pringle, as Boswell says, escaped, but the controversy between Tory and Covenanter raged with great fury, and ended in Johnson's pressing upon the old judge the question, what good Cromwell, of whom he had said something derogatory, had ever done to his country; when, after being much tortured, Lord Auchinleck at last spoke out, 'God! doctor, he gart kings ken that they had a *lith* in their neck'—he taught kings they had a *joint* in their necks. Jamie then set to mediating between his father and the philosopher, and availing himself of the judge's sense of hospitality, which was punctilious, reduced the debate to more order."

The following letter, dated Ashestiel, August 9, appears to have been written immediately on Scott's return from this expedition.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. Rokeby Park.

"My dear Morritt,

"Your letter reached me in the very centre of the Isle of Mull, from which circumstance you will perceive how vain it was for me even to attempt availing myself of your kind invitation to Rokeby, which would otherwise have given us so much pleasure. We deeply regretted the absence of our kind and accomplished friends, the Clephanes, yet, *entre nous*, as we were upon a visit to a family of the Capulets, I do not know but we may pay our respects to them more pleasantly at another time. There subsist some aching scars of the old wounds which were in former times inflicted upon each other by the rival tribes of M'Lean and Macdonald, and my very good friends the Laird of Staffa and Mrs. M'Lean Clephane are both too true Highlanders to be without the characteristic prejudices of their clans, which, in their case, divide two highly accomplished and most estimable families, living almost within sight of each other, and on an island where polished conversation cannot be supposed to abound.

I was delighted, on the whole, with my excursion. The weather was most excellent, during the whole time of our wanderings; and I need not tell you of Highland hospitality. The cavern at Staffa, and indeed the island itself, *dont on parle en histoire*, is one of the few *lions* which completely maintain an extended reputation. I do not know whether its extreme resemblance to a work of art, from the perfect regularity of the columns, or the grandeur of its dimensions, far exceeding the works of human industry, joined to a certain ruggedness and magnificent irregularity, by which nature vindicates her handiwork, are most forcibly impressed upon my memory. We also saw the far-famed Island of Columba, where there are many monuments of singular curiosity, forming a strange contrast to the squalid and dejected poverty of the present inhabitants of the isle. We accomplished both these objects in one day, but our return, though we had no alarms to boast of, was fatiguing to the ladies, and the sea not affording us quite such a smooth passage as we had upon the Thames (that morning we heard the voice of Lysons setting forth the contents of the records in the White Tower), did, as one may say, excite a combustion in the stomachs of some of our party. Mine being a staunch anti-revolutionist, was no otherwise troublesome than by demanding frequent supplies of cold beef and biscuit. Mrs. Apreece was of our party. Also

—Sir George Paul, for prison-house renowned,
A wandering knight, on high adventures bound.

—We left this celebrated philanthropist in a plight not unlike some of the misadventures of 'Him of the sorrowful figure.' The worthy baronet was mounted on a quadruped, which the owners called a pony, with his woful valet on another, and travelling slowly along the coast of Mull, in order to detect the point which approached nearest to the continent, protesting he would not again put foot in a boat, till he had discovered the shortest possible traject. Our separation reminded me of the disastrous incident in Byron's shipwreck, when they were forced to abandon two of their crew on an unknown coast, and beheld them at a distance commencing their solitary peregrination along the cliffs.

Walter Scott."

The Iona pebble, mentioned in Scott's letter from Ulva, being set in a brooch of the form of a harp, was sent to Joanna Baillie some months later; but it may be as well to insert here the letter which accompanied it. The young friend, to whose return from a trip to the seat of war in the Peninsula it alludes, was John Miller, Esq., then practising at the Scotch bar, but now an eminent King's counsel of Lincoln's Inn.

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

Edinburgh, Nov. 23, 1810.

"I should not have been so long your debtor, my dear Miss Baillie, for your kind and valued letter, had not the false knave, at whose magic touch the Iona pebbles were to assume a shape in some degree appropriate to the person to whom they are destined, delayed finishing his task. I hope you will set some value upon this little trumpery brooch, because it is a harp, and a Scotch harp, and set with Iona stones. This last circumstance is more valuable, if ancient tales be true, than can be ascertained from the reports of dull modern lapidaries. These green stones, blessed of St. Columba, have a virtue, saith old Martin, to gratify each of them a single wish of the wearer. I believe, that which is most frequently formed by those who gather them upon the shores of the Saint, is for a fair wind to transport them from his domains. Now, after this, you must suppose every thing respecting this said harp sacred and hallowed. The very inscription is, you will please to observe, in the ancient Celtic language and character, and has a very talismanic look. I hope that upon you it will have the effect of a conjuration, for the words *Buail a'n Teud* signify *Strike the String;* and thus having, like the pedlars who deal in like matters of value, exhausted all my eloquence in setting forth the excellent outward qualities and mysterious virtues of my little keepsake, I have only to add, in homely phrase, God give you joy to wear it. I am delighted with the account of your brother's sylvan empire in Glo'stershire. The planting and cultivation of trees always seemed to me the most interesting occupation of the country. I cannot enter into the spirit of common vulgar farming, though I am doomed to carry on, in a small extent, that losing trade. It never occurred to me to be a bit more happy because my turnips were better than my neighbours'; and as for *grieving* my shearers, as we very emphatically term it in Scotland, I am always too happy to get out of the way, that I may hear them laughing at a distance when on the harvest rigg.

'So every servant takes his course,
And bad at first, they all grow worse'—

I mean for the purposes of agriculture,—for my hind shall kill a salmon, and my plough-boy find a hare sitting, with any man in the forest. But planting and pruning trees I could work at from morning till night; and if ever my poetical revenues enable me to have a few acres of my own, that is one of the principal pleasures I look forward to. There is, too, a sort of self-congratulation, a little tickling self-flattery in the idea that, while you are pleasing and amusing yourself, you are seriously contributing to the future welfare of the country, and that your very acorn may send its future ribs of oak to future victories like Trafalgar.

"You have now by my calculation abandoned your extensive domains and returned to your Hampstead villa, which, at this season of the year, though the lesser, will prove, from your neighbourhood to good society, the more comfortable habitation of the two. Dr. Baillie's cares are transferred (I fear for some time) to a charge still more important than the poor Princess.* I trust in God that his skill and that of his brethren may be of advantage to the poor King; for a Regency, from its unsettled and uncertain tenure, must in every country, but especially where parties run so high, be a lamentable business. I wonder that the consequences which have taken place had not occurred sooner, during the long and trying suspense in which his mind must have been held by the protracted lingering state of a beloved child.

"Your country neighbours interest me excessively. I was delighted with the man, who remembered me, though he had forgotten Sancho Panza; but I am afraid my pre-eminence in his memory will not remain much longer than the worthy squire's government at Barataria. Mean while, the Lady of the Lake is likely to come to preferment in an unexpected manner, for two persons of no less eminence than Messrs. Martin and Reynolds, play carpenters in ordinary to Covent Garden, are employed in scrubbing, careening, and cutting her down into one of those new-fashioned sloops called a melo-drama, to be launched at the theatre; and my friend, Mr. H. Siddons, emulous of such a noble design, is at work on the same job here. It puts me in mind of the observation with which our parish smith accompanied his answer to an enquiry whom he had heard preach on Sunday. 'Mr. Such-a-one—O! sir, he made *neat work*,' thinking, doubtless, of turning off a horseshoe handsomely. I think my worthy artizans will make neat work too before they have done with my unlucky materials—but, as Durandarte says in the cavern of Montesinos—'Patience, cousin, and shuffle the cards.' Jeffrey *was* the author of the critique in the Edinburgh; he sent it to me in the sheet with an apology for some things in that of Marmion which he said contained needless asperities; and, indeed, whatever I may think of the justice of some part of his criticism, I think his general tone is much softened in my behalf.

"You say nothing about the drama on Fear, for which you have chosen so admirable a subject, and which, I think, will be in your own most powerful manner. I hope you will have an eye to its being actually represented. Perhaps of all passions it is the most universally interesting; for although most part of an audience may have been in love once in their lives, and many engaged in the pursuits of ambition, and some perhaps have fostered deadly hate; yet there will always be many in each case who cannot judge of the operations of these motives from personal experience: whereas, I will bet my life there is not a soul of them but has felt the impulse of fear, were it but, as the old tale goes, at snuffing a candle with his fingers. I believe I should have been able to communicate some personal anecdotes on the subject, had I been enabled to accomplish a plan I have had much at heart this summer, namely, to take a peep at Lord Wellington and his merry men in Portugal; but I found the idea gave Mrs. Scott more distress than I am entitled to do for the mere gratification of my own curiosity. Not that there would have been any great danger,—for I could easily, as a non-combatant, have kept out of the way of the "grinning honour" of my namesake, Sir Walter Blount, and I think I should have been overpaid for a little hardship and risk by the novelty of the scene. I could have got very good recommendations to Lord Wellington; and, I dare say, I should have picked up some curious materials for battle scenery. A friend of mine made the very expedition, and arriving at Oporto when our army was in retreat from the frontier, he was told of the difficulty and danger he might encounter in crossing the country to the southward, so as to join them on the march; nevertheless, he travelled on through a country totally deserted, unless when he met bands of fugitive peasantry flying they scarce knew whither, or the yet wilder groups of the Ordinanza, or *levy en masse*, who, fired with revenge or desire of plunder, had armed themselves to harass the French detached parties. At length in a low glen he heard, with feelings that may be easily conceived, the distant sound of a Highland bagpipe playing 'The Garb of Old Gaul,' and fell into the quarters of a Scotch regiment, where he was most courteously received by his countrymen, who assured 'his honour he was just come in time to see the pattle.' Accordingly, being a young man of spirit, and a volunteer sharp-shooter, he got a rifle, joined the light corps, and next day witnessed the Battle of Busaco, of which he describes the carnage as being terrible. The narrative was very simply told, and conveyed, better than any I have seen, the impressions which such scenes are likely to make when they have the effect (I had almost said the charm) of novelty. I don't know why it is I never found a soldier could give me an idea of a battle. I believe their mind is too much upon the *tactique* to regard the picturesque, just as the lawyers care very little for an eloquent speech at the bar, if it does not show good doctrine. The technical phrases of the military art, too, are unfavourable to convey a description of the concomitant terror and desolation that attends an engagement; but enough of this bald disjointed chat, from ever yours,

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* The Princess Amelia—whose death was immediately followed by the hopeless malady of King George III.

W. S."

There appeared in the London Courier of September 15, 1810, an article signed S. T. C., charging Scott with being a plagiarist, more especially from the works of the poet for whose initials this signature had no doubt been meant to pass. On reading this silly libel, Mr. Southey felt satisfied that Samuel Taylor Coleridge could have no concern in its manufacture; but as Scott was not so well acquainted with Coleridge as himself, he lost no time in procuring his friend's indignant disavowal, and forwarding it to Ashestiel. Scott acknowledges this delicate attention as follows:—

To Robert Southey, Esq.

"Ashestiel, Thursday.

"My dear Southey,

"Your letter, this morning received, released me from the very painful feeling, that a man of Mr. Coleridge's high talents, which I had always been among the first to appreciate as they deserve, had thought me worthy of the sort of public attack which appeared in the Courier of the 15th. The initials are so remarkable, and the trick so very impudent, that I was likely to be fairly duped by it, for which I have to request Mr. Coleridge's forgiveness. I believe attacks of any sort sit as light upon me as they can on any one. If I have had my share of them, it is one point, at least, in which I resemble greater poets—but I should not like to have them come from the hand of contemporary genius. A man, though he does not 'wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at,' would not willingly be stooped upon by a falcon. I am truly obliged to your friendship for so speedily relieving me from so painful a feeling. The hoax was probably designed to set two followers of literature by the ears, and I daresay will be followed up by something equally impudent. As for the imitations, I have not the least hesitation in saying to you, that I was unconscious at the time of appropriating the goods of others, although I have not the least doubt that several of the passages must have been running in my head. Had I meant to steal, I would have been more cautious to disfigure the stolen goods. In one or two instances the resemblance seems general and casual, and in one, I think, it was impossible I could practise plagiarism, as Ethwald, one of the poems quoted, was published *after* the Lay of the Last Minstrel. A witty rogue, the other day, who sent me a letter subscribed Detector, proved me guilty of stealing a passage from one of Vida's Latin poems, which I had never seen or heard of; yet there was so strong a general resemblance, as fairly to authorize Detector's suspicion.

"I renounced my Greta excursion in consequence of having made instead a tour to the Highlands, particularly to the Isles. I wished for Wordsworth and you a hundred times. The scenery is quite different from that on the mainland, dark, savage, and horrid, but occasionally magnificent in the highest degree. Staffa, in particular, merits well its far-famed reputation: it is a cathedral arch, scooped by the hand of nature, equal in dimensions and in regularity to the most magnificent aisle of a gothic cathedral. The sea rolls up to the extremity in most tremendous majesty, and with a voice like ten thousand giants shouting at once. I visited Icolmkill also, where there are some curious monuments, mouldering among the poorest and most naked wretches that I ever beheld. Affectionately yours,

W. Scott."

The "lines of Vida" which "Detector" had enclosed to Scott as the obvious original of the address to "Woman" in Marmion, closing with

"When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!"

end as follows;—and it must be owned that, if Vida had really written them, a more extraordinary example of casual coincidence could never have been pointed out—

"Cum dolor atque supercilio gravis imminet angor,
Fungeris angelico sola ministerio!"

Detector's reference is "Vida *ad Eranen*, El. II. v. 21;"—but it is almost needless to add there are no such lines—and no piece bearing such a title in Vida's works. Detector was no doubt some young college wag, for his letter has a Cambridge post-mark.

CHAPTER XXII.

LIFE OF MISS SEWARD—WAVERLEY RESUMED—BALLANTYNE'S CRITIQUE ON THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF THE NOVEL—WAVERLEY AGAIN LAID ASIDE—UNFORTUNATE SPECULATIONS OF JOHN BALLANTYNE AND CO.; HISTORY OF THE CULDEES—TIXALL POETRY; BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER—EDINBURGH ANNUAL REGISTER, ETC.—SCOTT'S ESSAY ON JUDICIAL REFORM—HIS SCHEME OF GOING TO INDIA—LETTERS ON THE WAR IN THE PENINSULA—DEATH OF LORD PRESIDENT BLAIR—AND OF LORD MELVILLE—PUBLICATION OF THE VISION OF DON RODERICK—THE INFERNO OF ALTESIDORA, ETC.—1810-1811.

In the course of this autumn appeared the Poetical Works of Miss Seward, in three volumes 12mo, with a Prefatory Memoir of her Life by Scott. This edition had, as we have seen, been enjoined by her last will—but his part in it was an ungrateful one, and the book was among the most unfortunate that James Ballantyne printed, and his brother published, in deference to the personal feelings of their partner. He had been, as was natural, pleased and flattered by the attentions of the Lichfield poetess in the days of his early aspirations after literary distinction; but her verses, which he had with his usual readiness praised to herself beyond their worth, appeared when collected a formidable monument of mediocrity. Her Correspondence, published at the same time by Constable, was considered by him with still greater aversion. He requested the bookseller to allow him to look over the MS., and draw his pen through passages in which her allusions to letters of his own might compromise him as a critic on his poetical contemporaries. To this request Constable handsomely acceded, although it was evident that he thus deprived the collection of its best chance of popularity. I see, on comparing her letters as they originally reached Scott, with the printed copies, that he had also struck out many of her most extravagant rhapsodies about himself and his works. No collection of this kind, after all, can be wholly without value; I have already drawn from it some sufficiently interesting fragments, as the biographers of other eminent authors of this time will probably do hereafter under the like circumstances: and, however affected and absurd, Miss Seward's prose is certainly far better than her verse.

And now I come to a very curious letter of James Ballantyne's, the date of which seems to fix pretty accurately the time when Scott *first* resumed the long forgotten MS. of his Waverley. As in the Introduction of 1829 he mentions having received discouragement as to the opening part of the novel from two friends, and as Ballantyne on this occasion writes as if he had never before seen any portion of it, I conclude that the fragment of 1805 had in that year been submitted to Erskine alone.

To Walter Scott, Esq., Ashestiel.

"Edinburgh, Sept. 15, 1810.

"Dear Sir,

"What you have sent of Waverley has amused me much; and certainly if I had read it as part of a new novel, the remainder of which was open to my perusal, I should have proceeded with avidity. So much for its general effect; but you have sent me too little to enable me to form a decided opinion. Were I to say that I was equally struck with Waverley as I was with the much smaller portion of the Lady, which you first presented to us as a specimen, the truth would not be in me; but the cases are different. It is impossible that a small part of a fine novel can equally impress one with the decided conviction of splendour and success, as a small part of a fine poem. I will state one or two things that strike me. Considering that 'sixty years since' only leads us back to the year 1750, a period when our fathers were alive and merry, it seems to me that the air of antiquity diffused over the character is rather too great to harmonize with the time. The period is modern; Johnson was writing—and Garrick was acting—and in fact scarcely any thing appears to have altered, more important than the cut of a coat.

"The account of the studies of Waverley seems unnecessarily minute. There are few novel-readers to whom it would be interesting. I can see at once the connection between the studies of Don Quixote, or of the Female Quixote, and the events of their lives; but I have not yet been able to trace betwixt Waverley's character and his studies such clear and decided connection. The account, in short, seemed to me too particular; quite unlike your usual mode in your poetry, and less happy. It may be, however, that the further progress of the character will defeat this criticism. The character itself I think excellent and interesting, and I was equally astonished and delighted to find in the last-written chapter, that you can paint to the eye in prose as well as in verse.

"Perhaps your own reflections are rather too often mixed with the narrative—but I state this with much diffidence. I do not mean to object to a train of reflections arising from some striking event, but I don't like their so frequent recurrence. The language is spirited, but perhaps rather careless. The humour is admirable. Should you go on? My opinion is, clearly—certainly. I have no doubt of success, though it is impossible to guess how much......—Ever respectfully,

J. B."

The part of the letter which I have omitted, refers to the state of Ballantyne's business at the time when it was written. He had, that same week, completed the eleventh edition of the Lay; and the fifth of the Lady of the Lake had not passed through his press, before new orders from London called for the beginning of a sixth. I presume the printer's exultation on this triumphant success, had a great share in leading him to consider with doubt and suspicion the propriety of his friend's interrupting just then his career as the great caterer for readers of poetry. However this and other matters may have stood, the novel appears to have been forthwith laid aside again.

Some sentences refer to less fortunate circumstances in their joint affairs. The publishing firm was as yet little more than a twelvemonth old, and already James began to apprehend that some of their mightiest undertakings would wholly disappoint Scott's prognostications. He speaks with particular alarm of the edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, of which Weber had now dismissed several volumes from his incompetent and presumptuous hand. How Scott should ever have countenanced the project of an edition of an English book of this class, by a mere drudging *German*, appears to me quite inexplicable. He placed at Weber's disposal his own annotated copy, which had been offered some years before for the use of Gifford; but Weber's text is thoroughly disgraceful, and so are all the notes, except those which he owed to his patron's own pen. James Ballantyne augurs, and well might he do so, not less darkly, as to "the Aston speculation"—that is, the bulky collection entitled "Tixal poetry." "Over this," he says, "the (Edinburgh) Review of the Sadler has thrown a heavy cloud—the fact is, it seems to me to have ruined it. Here is the same editor and the same printer, and your name withdrawn. I hope you agree with John and me, that this Aston business ought to be got rid of at almost any sacrifice. We could not now even ask a London bookseller to take a share, and a net outlay of near £2500, upon a worse than doubtful speculation is surely 'most tolerable and not to be endured.'"

Another unpromising adventure of this season, was the publication of the History of *the Culdees* (that is, of the clergy of the primitive Scoto-Celtic Church,) by Scott's worthy old friend, Dr. John Jamieson, the author of the celebrated Dictionary. This work, treating of an obscure subject, on which very different opinions were and are entertained by Episcopalians on the one hand, and the adherents of Presbyterianism on the other, was also printed and published by the Ballantynes, in consequence of the interest which Scott felt, not for the writer's hypothesis, but for the writer personally: and the result was another heavy loss to himself and his partners. But a far more serious business was the establishment of the Edinburgh Annual Register, which, as we have seen, was suggested by Scott in the very dawn of his bookselling projects. The two first volumes were issued about this time, and expectation had been highly excited by the announcement that the historical department was in the hands of Southey, while Scott and many other eminent persons were to contribute regularly to its miscellaneous literature and science. Mr. Southey was fortunate in beginning his narrative with the great era of the Spanish Revolt against Napoleon, and it exhibited his usual research, reflection, elegance, and spirit. Several of the miscellanies, also, were admirable: Mr. Southey inserted in the 2d volume for 1808, published in 1810, some of the most admired of his minor poems;—and Scott did the like. He moreover drew up for that volume an Essay of considerable extent on those changes in the Scottish System of Judicature, which had occupied the attention of the Commission under which he served as secretary; and the sagacity of this piece appears, on the whole, as honourable to him as the clear felicity of its language. Nevertheless, the public were alarmed by the prospect of two volumes annually: it was, in short, a new periodical publication on a large scale; all such adventures are hazardous in the extreme; and none of them ever can succeed, unless there be a skilful bookseller, and a zealous editor, who give a very large share of their industry and intelligence, day after day, to the conduct of all its arrangements. Such a bookseller John Ballantyne was not; such an editor, with Scott's multifarious engagements, he could not be for an Annual Register; and who, indeed, could wish that this had been otherwise? The volumes succeeded each other at irregular intervals; there was soon felt the want of one ever-active presiding spirit; and though the work was continued during a long series of years, it never was the source of any thing but anxiety and disappointment to its original projectors.

I am tempted, as Scott's Essay on Judicial Reform has never been included in any collection of his writings, to extract here a few specimens of a composition which appears to be as characteristic of the man as any that ever proceeded from his pen. His deep jealousy of the national honour of Scotland, his fear lest the course of innovation at this time threatened should end in a total assimilation of her Jurisprudence to the system of the more powerful sister country, and his habitual and deep-rooted dread of change in matters affecting the whole machinery of social existence, are expressed in, among others, the following passages:—

"An established system is not to be tried by those tests which may, with perfect correctness, be applied to a new theory. A civilized nation, long in possession of a code of law, under which, with all its inconveniences, they have found means to flourish, is not to be regarded as an infant colony, on which experiments in legislation may, without much charge of presumption, be hazarded. A philosopher is not entitled to investigate such a system by those ideas which he has fixed in his own mind as the standard of possible excellence. The only unerring test of every old establishment is the *effect* it has actually produced; for that must be held to be good from whence good is derived. The people have, by degrees, moulded their habits to the law they are compelled to obey; for some of its imperfections, remedies have been found; to others they have reconciled themselves; till, at last, they have, from various causes, attained the object which the most sanguine visionary could promise to himself from his own perfect *unembodied* system. Let us not be understood to mean, that a superstitious regard for antiquity ought to stay the hand of a temperate reform. But the task is delicate, and full of danger; perilous in its execution, and extremely doubtful in its issue. Is there not rational ground to apprehend, that, in attempting to eradicate the disease, the sound part of the constitution may be essentially injured? Can we be quite certain that less inconvenience will result from that newly-discovered and unknown remedy than from the evil, which the juices and humours with which it has long been incorporated may have neutralized?—that, after a thorough reformation has been achieved, it may not be found necessary to counterwork the antidote itself, by having recourse to the very error we have incautiously abjured? We are taught, by great authority, that 'possibly they may espy something that may, in truth, be mischievous in some particular case, but weigh not how many inconveniences are, on the other side, prevented or remedied by that which is the supposed vicious strictness of the law; and he that purchases a reformation of a law with the introduction of greater incoveniences, by the amotion of a mischief, makes an ill bargain. No human law can be absolutely perfect. It is sufficient that it be best *ut plurimum;* and as to the mischiefs that it occasions, as they are accidental and casual, so they may be oftentimes, by due care, prevented, without an alteration of the main.'*

"Every great reform, we farther conceive, ought to be taken at a point somewhat lower than the necessity seems to require. Montesquieu has a chapter, of which the title is, *Qu'il ne faut pas tout corriger.* Our improvement ought to contain within itself a principle of progressive improvement. We are thus enabled to see our way distinctly before us; we havé, at the same time, under our eyes, the ancient malady, with the palliatives by which the hand of time has controlled its natural symptoms, and the effects arising from the process intended to remove it; and our course, whether we advance or recede, will be safe, and confident, and honourable; whereas, by taking our reform at the utmost possible stretch of the wrong complained of, we cannot fail to bring into disrepute the order of things, as established, without any corresponding certainty that our innovations will produce the result which our sanguine hopes have anticipated; and we thus deprive ourselves of the chance of a secure retreat in the event of our failure."

Nor does the following paragraph on the proposal for extending to Scotland the system of *Jury Trial* in civil actions *of all classes,* appear to me less characteristic of Scott:—

"We feel it very difficult to associate with this subject any idea of political or personal liberty; both of which have been supposed to be secured, and even to be rendered more valuable, by means of the trial by jury in questions of private right. It is perhaps owing to our want of information, or to the phlegm and frigidity of our national character, that we cannot participate in that enthusiasm which the very name of this institution is said to excite in every patriotic bosom. We can listen to the cabalistic sound of Trial by Jury, which has produced effects only to be paralleled by those of the mysterious words uttered by the Queen of the City of Enchantments, in the Arabian Tale, and retain the entire possession of our form and senses. We understand that sentiment of a celebrated author, that this barrier against the usurpation of power, in matters where power has any concern, may probably avert from our island the fate of many states that now exist but in history; and we think this great possession is peculiarly valuable in Scotland, where the privileges of the public prosecutor are not controlled by those of a grand jury. The merits of the establishment we are now examining are to be ascertained by a different test. It is merely a contrivance for attaining the ends of private justice, for developing the merits of a civil question in which individuals are interested; and that contrivance is the best which most speedily and effectually serves the purpose for which it was framed. In causes of that description, no shield is necessary against the invasion of power; the issue is to be investigated without leaning or partiality, for whatever is unduly given to one party is unduly wrested from the other; and unless we take under our consideration those advantages which time or accident may have introduced, we see not what superiority can in the abstract be supposed to belong to this as a judicature for the determination of all or the greater number of civil actions. We discover no ground for suspecting that the judgments of a few well-educated and upright men may be influenced by any undue bias; that an interest merely patrimonial is more safely lodged in an obscure and evanescent body than in a dignified, independent, and permanent tribunal, versed in the science to be administered, and responsible for the decisions they pronounce;—and we suspect that a philosopher, contemplating both in his closet, will augur more danger from a system which devolves on one set of men

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* Lord Hale on the Amendment of the Laws.

> the responsibility of doctrines taught them by another, than from that system which attaches to the judges all the consequences of the law they deliver."

Some, though not all, of the changes deprecated in this Essay, had been adopted by the Legislature before it was published; others of them have since been submitted to experiment; and I believe that, on the whole, his views may safely bear the test to which time has exposed them—though as to the particular point of *trial by jury in civil causes*, the dreaded innovation, being conducted by wise and temperate hands, has, in its results, proved satisfactory to the people at large, as well as to the Bench and the Bar of Scotland. I have, however, chiefly introduced the above extracts as illustrative of the dissatisfaction with which Scott considered the commencement of a *system* of jurisprudential innovation; and though it must not be forgotten that his own office as a Clerk of Session had never yet brought him any thing but labour, and that he consequently complained from time to time of the inroads this labour made on hours which might otherwise have been more profitably bestowed, I suspect his antipathy to this new system, as a system, had no small share in producing the state of mind indicated in a remarkable letter addressed, in the latter part of this year, to his brother Thomas. The other source of uneasiness to which it alludes has been already touched upon—and we shall have but too much of it hereafter. He says to his brother (Ashestiel, 1st November, 1810),—

> "I have no objection to tell you in confidence, that, were Dundas to go out Governor-General to India, and were he willing to take me with him in a good situation, I would not hesitate to pitch the Court of Session and the booksellers to the devil, and try my fortune in another climate."

He adds, "but this is strictly *entre nous*"—nor indeed was I aware until I found this letter, that he had ever entertained such a design as that which it communicates. Mr. Dundas (now Lord Melville), being deeply conversant in our Eastern affairs, and highly acceptable to the Court of Directors in the office of President of the Board of Control, which he had long filled, was spoken of, at various times in the course of his public life, as likely to be appointed Governor-General of India. He had, no doubt, hinted to Scott that in case he should ever assume that high station it would be very agreeable for him to be accompanied by his early friend: and there could be little question of his capacity to have filled with distinction the part either of an Indian secretary or of an Indian judge.

But though it is easy to account for his expressing in so marked a manner at this particular period his willingness to relinquish literature as the main occupation of his time, it is impossible to consider the whole course of his correspondence and conversation without agreeing in the conclusion of Mr. Morritt, that he was all along sincere in the opinion that literature ought never to be ranked on the same scale of importance with the conduct of business in any of the great departments of public life. This opinion he always expressed, and I have no doubt that at any period preceding his acquisition of a landed property, he would have acted on it, even to the extent of leaving Scotland, had a suitable opportunity been afforded him to give that evidence of his sincerity. This is so remarkable a feature in his character, that the reader will forgive me should I recur to it in the sequel.

At the same time I have no notion that at this or any other period he contemplated abandoning literature. Such a thought would hardly enter the head of the man, not yet forty years of age, whose career had been one of unbroken success, and whose third great work had just been received with a degree of favour, both critical and popular, altogether unprecedented in the annals of his country. His hope, no doubt, was that an honourable official station in the East might afford him both a world of new materials for poetry, and what would in his case be abundance of leisure for turning them to account, according to the deliberate dictates of his own judgment. What he desired to escape from was not the exertion of his genius, which must ever have been to him the source of his most exquisite enjoyment, but the daily round of prosaic and perplexing toils in which his connexion with the Ballantynes had involved him. He was able to combine the regular discharge of such functions with the exercise of the high powers of imagination, in a manner of which history affords no other example; yet many, no doubt, were the weary hours, when he repented him of the rash engagements which had imposed such a burden of mere task-work on his energies. But his external position, before the lapse of another year, underwent a change, which for ever fixed his destiny to the soil of his best affections and happiest inspirations.

The letters of Scott to all his friends have sufficiently shown the unflagging interest with which, among all his personal labours and anxieties, he watched the progress of the great contest in the Peninsula. It was so earnest that he never on any journey, not even in his very frequent passages between Edinburgh and Ashestiel, omitted to take with him the largest and best map he had been able to procure of the seat of war; upon this he was perpetually poring, tracing the marches and countermarches of the French and English, by means of black and white pins; and not seldom did Mrs. Scott complain of this constant occupation of his attention and her carriage. In the beginning of 1811, a committee was formed in London to collect subscriptions for the relief of the Portuguese, who had seen their lands wasted, their vines torn up, and their houses burnt in the course of Massena's last unfortunate campaign; and Scott, on reading the advertisement, immediately addressed Mr. Whitmore, the chairman, begging that the committee would allow him to contribute to their fund the profits, to whatever they might amount, of a poem which he proposed to write upon a subject connected with the localities of the patriotic struggle. His offer was of course accepted; and "THE VISION OF DON RODERICK" was begun as soon as the Spring vacation enabled him to retire to Ashestiel.

On the 26th of April he writes thus to Mr. Morritt, who had lost a dear young friend in the battle of Barrosa.

"I rejoice with the heart of a Scotsman in the success of Lord Wellington, and with all the pride of a seer to boot. I have been for three years proclaiming him as the only man we had to trust to—a man of talent and genius—not deterred by obstacles, not fettered by prejudices, not immured within the pedantries of his profession—but playing the general and the hero when most of our military commanders would have exhibited the drill sergeant, or at best the adjutant. These campaigns will teach us what we have long needed to know, that success depends not on the nice drilling of regiments, but upon the grand movements and combinations of an army. We have been hitherto polishing hinges, when we should have studied the mechanical union of a huge machine. Now—our army begin to see that the *grand secret*, as the French call it, consists only in union, joint exertion, and concerted movement. This will enable us to meet the dogs on fair terms as to numbers, and for the rest, 'my soul and body on the action both.'

"The downfal of Buonaparte's military fame will be the signal of his ruin, and, if we may trust the reports this day brings us from Holland, there is glorious mischief on foot already. I hope we shall be able to fling fuel into the flame immediately. A country with so many dykes and ditches must be fearfully tenable when the peasants are willing to fight. How I should enjoy the disconsolate visages of those Whig dogs, those dwellers upon the Isthmus, who have been foretelling the rout and ruin which it only required their being in power to have achieved! It is quite plain, from Sir Robert Wilson's account, that they neglected to feed the lamp of Russia, and it only resulted from their want of opportunity that they did not quench the smoking flax in the Peninsula—a thought so profligate that those who, from party or personal interest, indulged it, ought to pray for mercy, and return thanks for the providential interruption which obstructed their purpose, as they would for a meditated but prevented parricide. But enough of the thorny subject of politics.

"I grieve for your loss at Barrosa, but what more glorious fall could a man select for himself or friend, than dying with his sword in hand and the cry of victory in his ears?

"As for my own operations they are very trifling, though sufficiently miscellaneous. I have been writing a sketch of Buonaparte's tactics for the Edinburgh Register, and some other trumpery of the same kind. Particularly I meditate some wild stanzas referring to the Peninsula: if I can lick them into any shape, I hope to get something handsome from the booksellers for the Portuguese sufferers: 'Silver and gold have I none, but that which I have will I give unto them.' My lyrics are called the Vision of Don Roderick: you remember the story of the last Gothic King of Spain descending into an enchanted cavern to know the fate of the Moorish invasion—that is my machinery. Pray, don't mention this, for some one will snatch up the subject as I have been served before: and I have not written a line yet. I am going to Ashestiel for eight days to fish and rhyme.

The poem was published, in 4to, in July; and the immediate proceeds were forwarded to the board in London. His friend, the Earl of Dalkeith, seems to have been a member of the committee, and he writes thus to Scott on the occasion:—

"Those with ample fortunes and thicker heads may easily give 100 guineas to a subscription, but the man is really to be envied who can draw that sum from his own brains, and apply the produce so beneficially and to so exalted a purpose."

I presume, however, that when his lordship thus mentions 100 guineas, he alludes merely to the first instalment of Scott's contribution.

In the original preface to this poem Scott alludes to two events which had "cruelly interrupted his task"—the successive deaths of his kind friend, the Lord President of the Court of Session (Blair),* and his early patron, Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville: and his letters at the time afford additional evidence of the shock his feelings had thus sustained.—

The following, to Mrs. Scott of Harden, is dated May 28th, 1811—

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* The Right Hon. Robert Blair of Avountom, son of the Author of "The Grave."

"My dear Madam,

"We are deprived of the prospect of waiting upon you on the birth-day, by the confusion into which the business of this court is thrown by the most unexpected and irreparable loss which it has sustained in the death of the President—it is scarcely possible to conceive a calamity which is more universally or will be so long felt by the country. His integrity and legal knowledge, joined to a peculiar dignity of thought, action, and expression, had begun to establish in the minds of the public at large that confidence in the regular and solemn administration of justice, which is so necessary to its usefulness and respectability. My official situation, as well as the private intimacy of our families, makes me a sincere mourner on this melancholy occasion, for I feel a severe personal deprivation, besides the general share of sorrow common to all of every party or description who were in the way of witnessing his conduct.

"He was a rare instance of a man whose habits were every way averse to the cultivation of popularity, rising, nevertheless, to the highest point in the public opinion, by the manly and dignified discharge of his duty. I have been really so much shocked and out of spirits, yesterday and the day preceding, that I can write and think of nothing else.

"I have to send you the Vision of Don Roderick, as soon as we can get it out—it is a trifle I have written to eke out the subscription for the suffering Portuguese. Believe me, my dear Mrs. Scott, ever yours most truly and respectfully,

WALTER SCOTT."

The next letter is to Mr. Morritt, who, like himself, had enjoyed a large share of Lord Melville's friendly regard; and had more than once met his Lordship, after his fall, at the Poet's house in Castle Street; where, by the way, the old Statesman entered with such simple-heartedness into all the ways of the happy circle, that it had come to be an established rule for the children *to sit up to supper* whenever Lord Melville dined there.

"Edinburgh, July 1, 1811.

"My dear M.

"I have this moment got your kind letter, just as I was packing up Don Roderick for you. This patriotic puppet-show has been finished under wretched auspices; poor Lord Melville's death so quickly succeeding that of President Blair, one of the best and wisest judges that ever distributed justice, broke my spirit sadly. My official situation placed me in daily contact with the President, and his ability and candour were the source of my daily admiration. As for poor dear Lord Melville, ''Tis vain to name him whom we mourn in vain.' Almost the last time I saw him, he was talking of you in the highest terms of regard, and expressing great hopes of again seeing you at Dunira this summer, where I proposed to attend you. *Hei mihi! quid hei mihi? humana perpessi sumus.* His loss will be long and severely felt here, and Envy is already paying her cold tribute of applause to the worth that she maligned while it walked upon earth.

"There is a very odd coincidence between the deaths of these eminent characters, and that of a very inferior person, a dentist of this city, named Dubisson. He met the President the day before his death, who used a particular expression in speaking to him; the day before Lord Melville died, he also met Dubisson nearly on the same spot, and to the man's surprise used the President's very words in saluting him. On this second death, he expressed (jocularly, however) an apprehension that he himself would be the third—was taken ill and died in an hour's space. Was not this remarkable? Yours ever,

W. S."

The Vision of Don Roderick had features of novelty, both as to the subject and the manner of the composition, which excited much attention, and gave rise to some sharp controversy. The main fable was indeed from the most picturesque region of old romance; but it was made throughout the vehicle of feelings directly adverse to those with which the Whig critics had all along regarded the interference of Britain in behalf of the nations of the Peninsula; and the silence which, while celebrating our other generals on that scene of action, had been preserved with respect to Scott's own gallant countryman, Sir John Moore, was considered or represented by them as an odious example of genius hood-winked by the influence of party. Nor were there wanting persons who affected to discover that the charm of Scott's poetry had to a great extent evaporated under the severe test to which he had exposed it, by adopting, in place of those comparatively light and easy measures in which he had hitherto dealt, the most elaborate one that our literature exhibits. The production, notwithstanding the complexity of the Spenserian stanza, had been very rapidly executed; and it shows, accordingly, many traces of negligence. But the patriotic inspiration of it found an echo in the vast majority of British hearts; many of the Whig oracles themselves acknowledged that the difficulties of the metre had been on the whole successfully overcome; and even the hardest critics were compelled to express unqualified admiration of various detached pictures and passages, which, in truth, as no one now disputes, neither he nor any other poet ever excelled. The whole setting or framework—whatever relates in short to the last of the Goths himself—was, I think, even then unanimously pronounced admirable; and no party feeling could blind any man to the heroic splendour of such stanzas as those in which the three equally gallant elements of a British army are contrasted. I incline to believe that the choice of the measure had been in no small degree the result of those hints which Scott had received on the subject of his favourite octosyllabics, more especially from Ellis and Canning; and, as we shall see presently, he about this time made more than one similar experiment, in all likelihood from the same motive.

Of the letters which reached him in consequence of the appearance of The Vision, he has preserved several, which had no doubt interested and gratified him at the time. One of these was from Lady Wellington, to whom he had never had the honour of being presented, but who could not, as she said, remain silent on the receipt of such a tribute to the fame of "the first and best of men." Ever afterwards she continued to correspond with him, and indeed, among the very last letters which the Duchess of Wellington appears to have written, was a most affecting one, bidding him farewell, and thanking him for the solace his works had afforded her during her fatal illness. Another was in these terms:—

To Walter Scott, Esq.

"Hinckley, July 26, 1811.

"My dear Sir,

"I am very glad that you have essayed a new metre—new I mean for you to use. That which you have chosen is perhaps at once the most artificial and the most magnificent that our language affords; and your success in it ought to encourage you to believe, that for you, at least, the majestic march of Dryden (to my ear the perfection of harmony) is not, as you seem to pronounce it, irrecoverable. Am I wrong in imagining that *Spenser* does not use the *plusquam-Alexandrine*—

the verse which is as much longer than an Alexandrine, as an Alexandrine is longer than an ordinary heroic measure? I have no books where I am, to which to refer. You use this—and in the first stanza.

"Your poem has been met on my part by an exchange somewhat like that of Diomed's armour against Glaucus's—brass for gold—a heavy speech upon bullion. If you have never thought upon the subject—as to my great contentment I never had a twelvemonth ago—let me counsel you to keep clear of it, and forthwith put my speech into the fire, unread. It has no one merit but that of sincerity. I formed my opinion most reluctantly; having formed it, I could not but maintain it; having maintained it in Parliament, I wished to record it intelligibly. But it is one which, so far from cherishing and wishing to make proselytes to, I would much rather renounce, if I could find a person to convince me that it is erroneous. This is at least an unusual state of mind in controversy. It is such as I do not generally profess on all subjects—such as you will give me credit for not being able to maintain, for instance, when either the exploits which you celebrate in your last poem, or your manner of celebrating them, are disputed or disparaged. Believe me, with great regard and esteem, very sincerely yours,

George Canning."

But, of all the letters addressed to the author of the Vision of Don Roderick, I am very sure no one was so welcome as that which reached him, some months after his poem had ceased to be new in England, from a dear friend of his earliest days, who, after various chances and changes of life, was then serving in Lord Wellington's army, as a captain in the 58th regiment. I am sure that Sir Adam Ferguson's good-nature will pardon my inserting here some extracts from a communication which his affectionate schoolfellow very often referred to in after years with the highest appearance of interest and pleasure.

To Walter Scott, Esq.

"Lisbon, 31st August, 1811.

"My dear Walter,

"After such a length of silence between us, and, I grant on my part, so unwarrantable, I think I see your face of surprise on recognising this MS., and hear you exclaim—What strange wind has blown a letter from *Linton?* I must say, that although both you and my good friend Mrs. S. must have set me down as a most indifferent, not to say ungrateful sort of gentleman, far otherwise has been the case, as in the course of my wanderings through this country, I have often beguiled a long march, or watchful night's duty, by thinking on the merry fireside in North Castle Street. However, the irregular roving life we lead, always interfered with my resolves of correspondence.

"But now, quitting self, I need not tell you how greatly I was delighted at the success of the Lady of the Lake. I dare say you are by this time well tired of such greetings—so I shall only say, that last spring I was so fortunate as to get a reading of it, when in the lines of Torres Vedras, and thought I had no inconsiderable right to enter into and judge of its beauties, having made one of the party on your first visit to the Trossachs; and you will allow, that a little vanity on my part on this account (every thing considered), was natural enough. While the book was in my possession, I had nightly invitations to *evening parties!* to read and illustrate passages of it; and I must say that (though not conscious of much merit in the way of recitation) my attempts to do justice to the grand opening of the stag-hunt, were always followed with bursts of applause—for this canto was the favourite among the rough sons of the fighting Third Division. At that time supplies of various kinds, especially any thing in the way of delicacies, were very scanty; and, in gratitude, I am bound to declare, that to the good offices of the Lady, I owed many a slice of ham, and rummer of hot punch, which, I assure you, were amongst the most welcome favours that one officer could bestow on another during the long rainy nights of last January and February. By desire of my messmates of the Black-cuffs, I some time ago sent a commission to London for a copy of the music of the boat-song 'Hail to the Chief,' as performed at Covent-Garden, but have not yet got it. If you can assist in this, I need not say that on every performance a flowing bumper will go round to the Bard. We have lately been fortunate in getting a good master to our band, who is curious in old Scotch and Irish airs, and has harmonized *Johnny Cope*, &c. &c. . . . .

"Lisbon, 6th October.

"I had written all the foregoing botheration, intending to send it by a wounded friend going home to Scotland, when, to my no small joy, your parcel, enclosing Don Roderick, reached me. How kind I take it your remembering old Linton in this way! A day or two after I received yours I was sent into the Alentejo, where I remained a month, and only returned a few days ago, much delighted with the trip. You wish to know how I like the Vision; but as you can't look for any learned critique from me, I shall only say that I fully entered into the spirit and beauty of it, and that I relished much the wild and fanciful opening of the introductory part; yet what particularly delighted me were the stanzas announcing the approach of the British fleets and armies to this country, and the three delightful ones descriptive of the different troops, English, Scotch, and Irish; and I can assure you the Pats are, to a man, enchanted with the picture drawn of their countrymen, and the mention of the great man himself. Your swearing, in the true character of a minstrel, 'shiver my harp and burst its every chord,' amused me not a little. From being well acquainted with a great many of the situations described, they had of course the more interest, and 'Grim Busaco's iron ridge' most happily paints the appearance of that memorable field. You must know that we have got with us some bright geniuses, natives of the *dear country*, and who go by the name of 'the poets.' Of course a present of this kind is not thrown away upon indifferent subjects, but it is read and repeated with all the enthusiasm your warmest wish could desire. Should it be my fate to survive, I am resolved to try my hand on a snug little farm either up or down the Tweed, somewhere in your neighbourhood, and on this dream many a delightful castle do I build.

"I am most happy to hear that the Club* goes on in the old smooth style. I am afraid, however, that now * * * has become a judge, the delights of *Scrogum* and *The Tailor* will be lost, till revived perhaps by the old croupier in the shape of a battered half-pay officer. Yours affectionately,

ADAM FERGUSON."

More than one of the gallant captain's *chateaux en Espagne* were, as we shall see, realized in the sequel. I must not omit a circumstance which had reached Scott from another source, and which he always took special pride in relating, namely, that in the course of the day when the Lady of the Lake first reached Sir Adam Ferguson, he was posted with his company on a point of ground exposed to the enemy's artillery; somewhere no doubt on the lines of Torres Vedras. The men were ordered to lie prostrate on the ground; while they kept that attitude, the Captain, kneeling at their head, read aloud the description of the battle in Canto VI., and the listening soldiers only interrupted him by a joyous huzza, whenever the French shot struck the bank close above them.

The only allusion which I have found, in Scott's letters, to the Edinburgh Review on his Vision, occurs in a letter to Mr. Morritt (26th September, 1811), which also contains the only hint of his having been about this time requested to undertake the task of rendering into English the *Charlemagne* of Lucien Buonaparte. He says—

"The Edinburgh Reviewers have been down on my poor Don hand to fist; but, truly, as they are too fastidious to approve of the campaign, I should be very unreasonable if I expected them to like the celebration of it. I agree with them, however, as to the lumbering weight of the stanza, and I shrewdly suspect it would require a very great poet indeed to prevent the tedium arising from the recurrence of rhymes. Our language is unable to support the expenditure of so many for each stanza: even Spenser himself, with all the license of using obsolete words and uncommon spellings, sometimes fatigues the ear. They are also very wroth with me for omitting the merits of Sir John Moore; but as I never exactly discovered in what these lay, unless in conducting his advance and retreat upon a plan the most likely to verify the desponding speculations of the foresaid reviewers, I must hold myself excused for not giving praise where I was unable to see that much was due. The only literary news I have to send you is, that Lucien Buonaparte's epic, in twenty-four *chants*, is about to appear. An application was made to me to translate it, which I negatived of course, and that roundly."*

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* See *ante*, page 96.

I have alluded to some other new experiments in versification about this time as probably originating in the many hints of Ellis, Canning, and probably of Erskine, that, if he wished to do himself full justice in poetical narration, he ought to attempt at least the rhyme of Dryden's Fables. Having essayed the most difficult of all English measures in Don Roderick, he this year tried also the heroic couplet, and produced that imitation of Crabbe, *The Poacher*:—on seeing which, Crabbe, as his son's biography tells us, exclaimed, "This man, whoever he is, can do all that I can, and *something more*." This piece, together with some verses, afterwards worked up into the Bridal of Triermain, and another fragment in imitation of Moore's Lyrics, when first forwarded to Ballantyne, were accompanied with a little note, in which he says: "Understand I have no idea of parody, but serious imitation, if I can accomplish it. The subject for my Crabbe is a character in his line which he has never touched. I think of Wordsworth, too, and perhaps a ghost story after Lewis. I should be ambitious of trying Campbell; but his peculiarity consists so much in the matter, and so little in the manner, that (to his praise be it spoken), I rather think I cannot touch him." The three imitations which he did execute appeared in the Edinburgh Register for 1809, published in the autumn of 1811. They were there introduced by a letter entitled The Inferno of Altisidora, in which he shadows out the chief reviewers of the day, especially his friends Jeffrey and Gifford, with admirable breadth and yet lightness of pleasantry. He kept his secret as to this Inferno, and all its appendages, even from Miss Baillie—to whom he says, on their appearance, that—"the imitation of Crabbe had struck him as good; that of Moore as bad; and that of himself as beginning well, but falling off grievously to the close." He seems to have been equally mysterious as to an imitation of the quaint love verses of the beginning of the 17th century, which had found its way shortly before into the newspapers, under the name of The Resolve;* but I find him acknowledging its parentage to his brother Thomas, whose sagacity had at once guessed the truth. "As to the Resolve," he says, "it is mine; and it is not—or, to be less enigmatical, it is an old fragment, which I coopered up into its present state with the purpose of quizzing certain judges of poetry, who have been extremely delighted, and declare that no living poet could write in the same exquisite taste." These critics were his friends of the Friday Club. When included in the Register, however, the Resolve had his name affixed to it. In that case his concealment had already answered its purpose. It is curious to trace the beginnings of the systematic mystification which he afterwards put in practice with regard to the most important series of his works.

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* The ponderous epic entitled, *Charlemagne, ou l'Eglise Delivrée* was published in 1814; and an English version, by the Rev. S. Butler and the Rev. F. Hodgson, appeared in 1815. 2 vols. 4to.

† See Poetical Works, edition 1834, vol. viii. p. 374.

The quarto edition of Don Roderick having rapidly gone off, instead of reprinting the poem as usual in a separate octavo, he inserted it entire in the current volume of the Register; a sufficient proof how much that undertaking was already felt to require extraordinary exertion on the part of its proprietors. Among other minor tasks of the same year, he produced an edition of Wilson's Secret History of the Court of King James I., in two vols. 8vo, to which he supplied a copious preface, and a rich body of notes. He also contributed two or three articles to the Quarterly Review.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NEW ARRANGEMENT CONCERNING THE CLERKS OF SESSION—SCOTT'S FIRST PURCHASE OF LAND—ABBOTSFORD; TURN-AGAIN, ETC.—JOANNA BAILLIE'S ORRA, ETC.—DEATH OF JAMES GRAHAME—AND OF JOHN LEYDEN.—1811.

THROUGHOUT 1811, Scott's serious labour continued to be bestowed on the advancing edition of Swift; but this and all other literary tasks were frequently interrupted in consequence of an important step which he took early in the year; namely, the purchase of the first portion of what became in the sequel an extensive landed property in Roxburghshire. He had now the near prospect of coming into the beneficial use of the office he had so long filled without emolument in the Court of Session. For, connected with the other reforms in the Scotch judicature, was a plan for allowing the retirement of functionaries, who had served to an advanced period of life, upon pensions; should this meet the approbation of parliament, there was little doubt Mr. George Home would avail himself of the opportunity to resign the place of which he had now for five years executed none of the duties; and the second Lord Melville, who had now succeeded his father as the virtual Minister for Scotland, had so much at heart a measure in itself obviously just and prudent, that little doubt could be entertained of the result of his efforts in its behalf. The Clerks of Session, it had been already settled, were henceforth to be paid not by fees, but by fixed salaries; the amount of each salary, it was soon after arranged, should be £1300 per annum; and contemplating a speedy accession of professional income so considerable as this, and at the same time a vigorous prosecution of his literary career, Scott fixed his eyes on a small farm within a few miles of Ashestiel, which it was understood would presently be in the market, and resolved to place himself by its acquisition in the situation to which he had probably from his earliest days looked forward as the highest object of ambition, that of a Tweedside Laird.—*Sit mihi sedes utinam senectæ!*

And the place itself, though not to the general observer a very attractive one, had long been one of peculiar interest for him. I have often heard him tell, that when travelling in his boyhood with his father, from Selkirk to Melrose, the old man suddenly desired the carriage to halt at the foot of an eminence, and said, "we must get out here, Walter, and see a thing quite in your line." His father then conducted him to a rude stone on the edge of an acclivity about half a mile above the Tweed at Abbotsford, which marks the spot—

"Where gallant Cessford's life-blood dear
Reeked on dark Elliott's border spear."

This was the conclusion of the battle of Melrose, fought in 1526, between the Earls of Angus and Home, and the two chiefs of the race of Kerr, on the one side, and Buccleuch and his clan on the other, in sight of the young King James V., the possession of whose person was the object of the contest. This battle is often mentioned in the Border Minstrelsy, and the reader will find a long note on it, under the lines which I have just quoted from the Lay of the Last Minstrel. In the names of various localities between Melrose and Abbotsford, such as *Skirmish-field, Charge-Law*, and so forth, the incidents of the fight have found a lasting record; and the spot where the retainer of Buccleuch terminated the pursuit of the victors by the mortal wound of Kerr of Cessford (ancestor of the Dukes of Roxburghe), has always been called *Turn-again*. In his own future domain the young minstrel had before him the scene of the last great Clan-battle of the Borders.

On the 12th of May, 1811, he writes to James Ballantyne, apologizing for some delay about proof-sheets.

> "My attention, "he adds, "has been a little dissipated by considering a plan for my own future comfort, which I hasten to mention to you. My lease of Ashestiel is out—I now sit a tenant at will under a heavy rent, and at all the inconvenience of one when in the house of another. I have, therefore, resolved to purchase a piece of ground sufficient for a cottage and a few fields. There are two pieces, either of which would suit me, but both would make a very desirable property indeed. They stretch along the Tweed near half-way between Melrose and Selkirk, on the opposite side from Lord Somerville, and could be had for between £7000 and £8000—or either separate for about half the sum. I have serious thoughts of one or both, and must have recourse to my pen to make the matter easy. The worst is the difficulty which John might find in advancing so large a sum as the copyright of a new poem; supposing it to be made payable within a year at farthest from the work going to press,—which would be essential to my purpose. Yet the Lady of the Lake came soon home. I have a letter this morning giving me good hope of my Treasury business being carried through: if this takes place, I will buy both the little farms, which will give me a mile of the beautiful turn of Tweed, above Gala-foot—if not, I will confine myself to one. As my income, in the event supposed, will be very considerable, it will afford a sinking fund to clear off what debt I may incur in making this purchase. It is proper John and you should be as soon as possible apprized of these my intentions, which I believe you will think reasonable in my situation, and at my age, while I may yet hope to sit under the shade of a tree of my own planting. I shall not, I think, want any pecuniary assistance beyond what I have noticed, but of course my powers of rendering it will be considerably limited for a time. I hope this Register will give a start to its pre-

decessors; I assure you I shall spare no pains. John must lend his earnest attention to clear his hands of the quire stock, and to taking in as little as he can unless in the way of exchange; in short, reefing our sails, which are at present too much spread for our ballast."

He alludes in the same letter to a change in the firm of Messrs. Constable, which John Ballantyne had just announced to him; and, although some of his prognostications on this business were not exactly fulfilled, I must quote his expressions for the light they throw on his opinion of Constable's temper and character.

"No association," he says, "of the kind Mr. C. proposes, will stand two years with him for its head. His temper is too haughty to bear with the complaints, and to answer all the minute enquiries, which partners of that sort will think themselves entitled to make, and expect to have answered. Their first onset, however, will be terrible, and John must be prepared to lie by . . . . . The new poem would help the presses."

The new partners to which he refers were Mr. Robert Cathcart, Writer to the Signet, a man of high worth and integrity, who continued to be connected with Constable's business until his death in November, 1812; and Mr. Robert Cadell, who afterwards married Mr. Constable's eldest daughter.*

Of the two adjoining farms, both of which he had at this time thought of purchasing, he shortly afterwards made up his mind that one would be sufficient to begin with; and he selected that nearest to Ashestiel, and comprising the scene of Cessford's slaughter. The person from whom he bought it was an old friend of his own, whose sterling worth he venerated, and whose humorous conversation rendered him an universal favourite among the gentry of the Forest—the late Rev. Dr. Robert Douglas, minister of Galashiels—the same man to whom Mrs. Cockburn described the juvenile prodigy of George's Square, in November, 1777. Dr. Douglas had never resided on the property, and his efforts to embellish it had been limited to one stripe of firs, so long and so narrow that Scott likened it to a black hair-comb. It ran from the precincts of the homestead towards *Turn-again*, and has bequeathed the name of *the Doctor's redding-kame* to the mass of nobler trees amidst which its dark straight line can now hardly be traced. The farm consisted of a rich meadow or haugh along the banks of the river, and about a hundred acres of ground behind, all in a neglected state, undrained, wretchedly enclosed, much of it covered with nothing better than the native heath. The farm-house itself was small and poor, with a common *kail-yard* on one flank, and a staring barn of the doctor's erection on the other; while in front appeared a filthy pond covered with ducks and duckweed, from which the whole tenement had derived the unharmonious designation of *Clarty Hole*. But the Tweed was every thing to him—a beautiful river, flowing broad and bright over a bed of milk-white pebbles, unless here and there where it darkened into a deep pool, overhung as yet only by the birches and alders which had survived the statelier growth of the primitive Forest; and the first hour that he took possession he claimed for his farm the name of the adjoining *ford*, situated just above the influx of the classical tributary Gala. As might be guessed from the name of *Abbotsford*, these lands had all belonged of old to the great Abbey of Melrose; and indeed the Duke of Buccleuch, as the territorial representative of that religious brotherhood, still retains some seignorial rights over them, and almost all the surrounding district. Another feature of no small interest in Scott's eyes was an ancient Roman road leading from the Eildon hills to this ford, the remains of which, however, are now mostly sheltered from view amidst his numerous plantations. The most graceful and picturesque of all the monastic ruins in Scotland, the Abbey of Melrose itself, is visible from many points in the immediate neighbourhood of the house; and last, not least, on the rising ground full in view across the river, the traveller may still observe the chief traces of that ancient British barrier, the *Catrail*, of which the reader has seen frequent mention in Scott's early letters to Ellis, when investigating the antiquities of Reged and Strathclyde.

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* This union was dissolved by the death of the lady within a year of the marriage. Mr. Cadell, not long after the catastrophe of 1826, became sole publisher of Scott's later works.

Such was the territory on which Scott's prophetic eye already beheld rich pastures embosomed among flourishing groves, where his children's children should thank the founder. But the state of his feelings, when he first called these fields his own, will be best illustrated by a few extracts from his letters. To his brother-in-law, Mr. Carpenter, he thus writes, from Ashestiel, on the 5th of August—

"As my lease of this place is out, I have bought, for about £4000, a property in the neighbourhood, extending along the banks of the river Tweed for about half a mile. It is very bleak at present, having little to recommend it but the vicinity of the river; but as the ground is well adapted by nature to grow wood, and is considerably various in form and appearance, I have no doubt that by judicious plantations it may be rendered a very pleasant spot; and it is at present my great amusement to plan the various lines which may be necessary for that purpose. The farm comprehends about a hundred acres, of which I shall keep fifty in pasture and tillage, and plant all the rest, which will be a very valuable little possession in a few years, as wood bears a high price among us. I intend building a small cottage for my summer abode, being obliged by law, as well as induced by inclination, to make this country my residence for some months every year. This is the greatest incident which has lately taken place in our domestic concerns, and I assure you we are not a little proud of being greeted as *laird* and *lady* of *Abbotsford*. We will give a grand gala when we take possession of it, and as we are very *clannish* in this corner, all the Scots in the country, from the Duke to the peasant, shall dance on the green to the bagpipes, and drink whisky punch. Now as this happy festival is to be deferred for more than a twelvemonth, during which our cottage is to be built, &c. &c., what is there to hinder brother and sister Carpenter from giving us their company upon so gratifying an occasion? Pray, do not stay broiling yourself in India, for a moment longer than you have secured comfort and competence. Don't look forward to *peace*; it will never come either in your day or mine."

The same week he says to Joanna Baillie—

"My dreams about my cottage go on; of about a hundred acres I have manfully resolved to plant from sixty to seventy; as to my scale of dwelling, why, you shall see my plan when I have adjusted it. My present intention is to have only two spare bed-rooms, with dressing-rooms, each of which will, on a pinch, have a couch bed; but I cannot relinquish my Border principle of accommodating all the cousins and *duniwastles*, who will rather sleep on chairs, and on the floor, and in the hay-loft, than be absent when folks are gathered together; and truly I used to think Ashestiel was very much like the tent of Paribanou, in the Arabian Nights, that suited alike all numbers of company equally; ten people fill it at any time, and I remember its lodging thirty-two without any complaint. As for the *go-about*-folks, they generally pay their score one way or other; for you who are always in the way of seeing, and commanding, and selecting your society, are too fastidious to understand how a dearth of news may make any body welcome that can tell one the current report of the day. If it is any pleasure to these stragglers to say I made them welcome as strangers, I am sure that costs me nothing—only I deprecate publication, and am now the less afraid of it that I think scarce any bookseller will be desperate enough to print a new Scottish tour. Besides, one has the pleasure to tell over all the stories that have bored your friends a dozen of times, with some degree of propriety. In short, I think, like a true Scotchman, that a stranger, unless he is very unpleasant indeed, usually brings a title to welcome along with him; and to confess the truth, I do a little envy my old friend Abouhassan his walks on the bridge of Bagdad, and evening conversations, and suppers with the guests whom he was never to see again in his life: he never fell into a scrape till he met with the Caliph—and, thank God, no Caliphs frequent the brigg of Melrose, which will be my nearest Rialto at Abbotsford.

"I never heard of a stranger that utterly baffled all efforts to engage him in conversation, excepting one whom an acquaintance of mine met in a stage-coach. My friend,* who piqued himself on his talents for conversation, assailed this tortoise on all hands, but in vain, and at length descended to expostulation. 'I have talked to you, my friend, on all the ordinary subjects—literature, farming, merchandise—gaming, game-laws, horse-races—suits at law—politics, and swindling, and blasphemy, and philosophy—is there any one subject that you will favour me by opening upon?' The wight writhed his countenance into a grin—'Sir,' said he, 'can you say any thing clever about *bend leather*?' There, I own, I should have been as much nonplussed as my acquaintance; but upon any less abstruse subject, I think, in general, something may be made of a stranger, worthy of his clean sheets, and beef-steak, and glass of port. You, indeed, my dear friend, may suffer a little for me, as I should for you, when such a fortuitous acquaintance talks of the intercourse arising from our meeting as any thing beyond the effect of chance and civility: but these braggings break no bones, and are always a compliment to the person of whom the discourse is held, though the narrator means it to himself; for no one can suppose the affectation of intimacy can be assumed unless from an idea that it exalts the person who brags of it. My little folks are well, and I am performing the painful duty of hearing my little boy his Latin lesson every morning; painful, because my knowledge of the language is more familiar than grammatical, and because little Walter has a disconsolate yawn at intervals which is quite irresistible, and has nearly cost me a dislocation of my jaws."

In answering the letter which announced the acquisition of Abbotsford, Joanna Baillie says, very prettily:—

"Yourself, and Mrs. Scott, and the children, will feel sorry at leaving Ashestiel, which will long have a consequence, and be the object of kind feelings with many, from having once been the place of your residence. If I should ever be happy enough to be at Abbotsford, you must take me to see Ashestiel too. I have a kind of tenderness for it, as one has for a man's first wife, when you hear he has married a second."

The same natural sentiment is expressed in a manner characteristically different, in a letter from the Ettrick shepherd, of about the same date:—

"Are you not sorry at leaving *auld Ashestiel* for *gude an' a'*, after having been at so much trouble and expense in making it a complete thing! Upon my word I was, on seeing it in the papers."

That Scott had many a pang in quitting a spot which had been the scene of so many innocent and noble pleasures, no one can doubt; but the desire of having a permanent abiding-place of his own, in his ancestorial district, had long been growing upon his mind; and, moreover, he had laboured in adorning Ashestiel, not only to gratify his own taste as a landscape gardener, but because he had for years been looking forward to the day when Colonel (now General) Russell would return from India to claim possession of his romantic inheritance. And he was overpaid for all his exertions, when the gallant soldier sat down at length among the trees which an affectionate kinsman had pruned and planted in his absence. He retained, however, to the end of his life, a certain "tenderness of feeling" towards Ashestiel, which could not perhaps be better shadowed than in Joanna Baillie's similitude. It was not his first country residence—nor could its immediate landscape be said to equal the Vale of the Esk, either in actual picturesqueness, or (before Marmion) in dignity of association. But it was while occupying Ashestiel that he first enjoyed habitually the free presence of wild and solitary nature; and I shall here quote part of a letter, in which he alludes to his favourite wildernesses between Tweed and Yarrow, in language, to my mind, strongly indicative of the regrets and misgivings with which he must have taken his farewell wanderings over them in the summer and autumn of 1811.

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* This friend was Mr. William Clerk.

Miss Baillie had then in the press a new volume of Tragedies, but had told her friend that the publication, for booksellers' reasons, would not take place until winter. He answers (August 24th),—

> "Were it possible for me to hasten the treat I expect by such a composition with you, I would promise to read the volume at the silence of noonday, upon the top of Minchmuir, or Windlestrawlaw. The hour is allowed, by those skilful in demonology, to be as full of witching as midnight itself; and I assure you, I have felt really oppressed with a sort of fearful loneliness, when looking around the naked and towering ridges of desolate barrenness, which is all the eye takes in from the top of such a mountain—the patches of cultivation being all hidden in the little glens and valleys—or only appearing to make one sensible how feeble and inefficient the efforts of art have been to contend with the genius of the soil. It is in such a scene that the unknown author of a fine, but unequal poem, called *Albania*, places the remarkable superstition which consists in hearing the noise of a chase, with the baying of the hounds, the throttling sobs of the deer, the hollos of a numerous band of huntsmen, and the 'hoofs thick beating on the hollow hill.' I have often repeated his verses with some sensations of awe in such a place, and I am sure yours would effect their purpose as completely."*

Miss Baillie sent him, as soon as it was printed, the book to which this communication refers; she told him it was to be her last publication, and that she was getting her knitting needles in order—meaning to begin her new course of industry with a purse, by way of return for his Iona brooch. The poetess mentioned, at the same time, that she had met the evening before with a Scotch lady, who boasted that "she had once been Walter Scott's bedfellow."—"Don't start," adds Joanna, "it is thirty years since the irregularity took place, and she describes her old bedfellow as the drollest looking, entertaining little urchin that ever was seen. I told her that you are a great strong man, six feet high, but she does not believe me." In point of fact, the assigned date was a lady's one; for the irregularity in question occurred on board the Leith smack which conveyed Walter Scott to London on his way to Bath, when he was only four years of age, A. D. 1775.

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* The reader will find these lines from Albania (which Scott was very fond of repeating) quoted in a Note to his ballad of "The Wild Huntsman."—*Poetical Works*, vol. vi. p. 308.

Miss Baillie's welcome volume contained, among others, her tragedy on the Passion of Fear; and Scott gives so much of himself in the letter acknowledging this present, that I must insert it at length.

To Miss Joanna Baillie.

"My dear Friend,

". . . . It is too little to say I am enchanted with the said third volume, especially with the two first plays, which in every point not only sustain, but even exalt your reputation as a dramatist. The whole character of Orra is exquisitely supported as well as imagined, and the language distinguished by a rich variety of fancy, which I know no instance of excepting in Shakspeare. After I had read Orra twice to myself, Terry read it over to us a third time, aloud, and I have seldom seen a little circle so much affected as during the whole fifth act. I think it would act charmingly, omitting, perhaps, the baying of the hounds, which could not be happily imitated, and retaining only the blast of the horn and the halloo of the huntsmen at a distance. Only I doubt if we have now an actress that could carry through the mad scene in the fifth act, which is certainly one of the most sublime that ever were written. Yet I have a great quarrel with this beautiful drama, for you must know you have utterly destroyed a song of mine, precisely in the turn of your outlaw's ditty, and sung by persons in somewhat the same situation. I took out my unfortunate manuscript to look at it, but alas! it was the encounter of the iron and the earthen pitchers in the fable. I was clearly sunk, and the potsherds not worth gathering up. But only conceive that the chorus should have run thus *verbatim*—

'"Tis mirk midnight with peaceful men,
With us 'tis dawn of day'—

And again—

'Then boot and saddle, comrades boon,
Nor wait the dawn of day.'*

"I think the Dream extremely powerful indeed, but I am rather glad we did not hazard the representation. It rests so entirely on Osterloo, that I am almost sure we must have made a bad piece of work of it. By-the-by a story is told of an Italian buffoon, who had contrived to give his master, a petty prince of Italy, a good hearty ducking, and a fright to boot, to cure him of an ague; the treatment succeeded, but the potentate, by way of retaliation, had his audacious physician tried for treason, and condemned to lose his head: the criminal was brought forth, the priest heard his confession, and the poor jester knelt down to the block. Instead of wielding his axe, the executioner, as he had been instructed, threw a pitcher of water on the bare neck of the criminal; here the jest was to have terminated, but poor Gonella was found dead on the spot. I believe the catastrophe is very possible.† The latter half of the volume I have not perused with the same attention, though I have devoured both the Comedy and the Beacon in a hasty manner. I think the approbation of the public will make you alter your intention of taking up the knitting-needle—and that I shall be as much to seek for my purse as for the bank-notes which you say are to stuff it—though I have no idea where they are to come from. But I shall think more of the purse than the notes, come when or how they may.

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* These lines were accordingly struck out of the outlaw's song in Rokeby. The verses of *Orra*, to which Scott alludes, are no doubt the following:—

"The wild-fire dances on the fen,
The red star sheds its ray,
Up rouse ye, then, my merry men,
It is our opening day," &c.

Plays on the Passions, vol. iii. p. 44.

† This story is told, among others, by Montaigne.

"To return, I really think *Fear* the most dramatic passion you have hitherto touched, because capable of being drawn to the most extreme paroxysm on the stage. In Orra you have all gradations, from a timidity excited by a strong and irritable imagination, to the extremity which altogether unhinges the understanding. The most dreadful fright I ever had in my life (being neither constitutionally timid, nor in the way of being exposed to real danger), was in returning from Hampstead the day which I spent so pleasantly with you. Although the evening was nearly closed, I foolishly chose to take the short cut through the fields, and in that enclosure, where the path leads close by a thick and high hedge—with several gaps in it, however—did I meet one of your very thorough-paced London ruffians, at least judging from the squalid and jail-bird appearance and blackguard expression of countenance. Like the man that met the devil, I had nothing to say to him, if he had nothing to say to me, but I could not help looking back to watch the movements of such a suspicious figure, and to my great uneasiness saw him creep through the hedge on my left hand. I instantly went to the first gap to watch his motions, and saw him stooping, as I thought, either to lift a bundle or to speak to some person who seemed lying in the ditch. Immediately after, he came cowering back up the opposite side of the hedge, as returning towards me under cover of it. I saw no weapons he had, except a stick, but as I moved on to gain the stile which was to let me into the free field—with the idea of a wretch springing upon me from the cover at every step I took—I assure you I would not wish the worst enemy I ever had to undergo such a feeling as I had for about five minutes; my fancy made him of that description which usually combines murder with plunder, and though I was well armed with a stout stick and a very formidable knife, which when opened becomes a sort of *skenedhu*, or dagger, I confess my sensations, though those of a man much resolved not to die like a sheep, were vilely short of heroism; so much so, that when I jumped over the stile, a sliver of the wood run a third of an inch between my nail and flesh, without my feeling the pain, or being sensible such a thing had happened. However, I saw my man no more, and it is astonishing how my spirits rose when I got into the open field;—and when I reached the top of the little mount, and all the bells in London (for aught I know) began to jingle at once, I thought I had never heard any thing so delightful in my life—so rapid are the alternations of our feelings. This foolish story,—for perhaps I had no rational ground for the horrible feeling which possessed my mind for a little while, came irresistibly to my pen when writing to you on the subject of terror.

"Poor Grahame, gentle, and amiable, and enthusiastic, deserves all you can say of him; his was really a hallowed harp, as he was himself an Israelite without guile. How often have I teazed him, but never out of his good-humour, by praising Dundee and laughing at the Covenanters!—but I beg your pardon, you are a Westland Whig too, and will perhaps make less allowance for a descendant of the persecutors. I think his works should be collected and published for the benefit of his family. Surely the wife and orphans of such a man have a claim on the generosity of the public.*

"Pray make my remembrance to the lady who so kindly remembers our early intimacy. I do perfectly remember being an exceedingly spoiled, chattering monkey, whom indifferent health and the cares of a kind Grandmamma and Aunt, had made, I suspect, extremely abominable to every body who had not a great deal of sympathy and good-nature, which I daresay was the case of my *quondam* bedfellow, since she recollects me so favourably. Farewell, and believe me faithfully and respectfully, your sincere friend,

WALTER SCOTT."

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* James Grahame, author of The Sabbath, had been originally a member of the Scotch Bar, and was an early friend of Scott's. Not succeeding in the law, he—(with all his love for the Covenanters)—took orders in the Church of England, obtained a curacy in the County of Durham, and died there, on the 14th of September, 1811, in the 47th year of his age. See a Memoir of his Life and Writings in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1812, Part ii., pp. 384—415.

Miss Baillie, in her next letter, mentioned the name of the "old bedfellow," and that immediately refreshed Scott's recollection.

> "I do," he replies, "remember *Miss Wright* perfectly well. Oh, how I should like to talk over with her our voyage in the good ship the Duchess of Buccleuch, Captain Beatson, master; much of which, from the novelty doubtless of the scene, is strongly impressed on my memory. A long voyage it was—of twelve days, if I mistake not, with the variety of a day or two in Yarmouth Roads. I believe the passengers had a good deal of fun with me; for I remember being persuaded to shoot one of them with an air-gun, who, to my great terror, lay obstinately dead on the deck, and would not revive till I fell a-crying, which proved the remedy specific upon the occasion."

The mention of Mr. Terry, in the letter about Orra, reminds me to observe that Scott's intimacy with that gentleman began to make very rapid progress from the date of the first purchase of Abbotsford. He spent several weeks of that autumn at Ashestiel, riding over daily to the new farm, and assisting his friend with advice, which his acquirements as an architect and draughtsman rendered exceedingly valuable, as to the future arrangements about both house and grounds. Early in 1812 Terry proceeded to London, and made, on the 20th May, a very successful *debut* on the boards of the Haymarket as Lord Ogleby. He continued, however, to visit Scotland almost every season, and no ally had more to do either with the plans ultimately adopted as to Scott's new structure, or with the collection of literary and antiquarian curiosities which now constitute its museum. From this time the series of letters between them is an ample one. The intelligent zeal with which the actor laboured to promote the gratification of the poet's tastes and fancies on the one side: on the other, Scott's warm anxiety for Terry's professional success, the sagacity and hopefulness with which he counsels and cheers him throughout, and the good-natured confidence with which he details his own projects—both the greatest and the smallest,—all this seems to me to make up a very interesting picture. To none of his later correspondents, with the one exception of Mr. Morritt, does Scott write with a more perfect easy-heartedness than to Terry; and the quaint dramatic turns and allusions with which these letters abound will remind all who knew him of the instinctive courtesy with which he uniformly adopted in conversation a strain the most likely to fall in with the habits of any companion. It has been mentioned that his acquaintance with Terry sprung from Terry's familiarity with the Ballantynes: as it ripened, he had, in fact, learned to consider the ingenious comedian as another brother of that race; and Terry, transplanted to the south, was used and trusted by him, and continued to serve and communicate with him, very much as if one of themselves had found it convenient to establish his head-quarters in London.

Among the letters written immediately after Scott had completed his bargain with Dr. Douglas, is one which (unlike the rest) I found in his own repositories:—

"*For Doctor Leyden, Calcutta.*

"*Favoured by the Hon. Lady Hood.*

"Ashestiel, 25th August, 1811.

"My dear Leyden,

"You hardly deserve I should write to you, for I have written you two long letters since I saw Mr. Purves and received from him your valued dagger,* which I preserve carefully till Buonaparte shall come or send for it. I might take a cruel revenge on you for your silence, by declining Lady Hood's request to make you acquainted with her; in which case, I assure you, great would be your loss. She is quite a congenial spirit; an ardent Scotswoman, and devotedly attached to those sketches of traditionary history, which all the waters of the Burrampooter cannot, I suspect, altogether wash out of your honour's memory. This, however, is the least of her praises. She is generous and feeling, and intelligent, and has contrived to keep her heart and social affections broad and awake amidst the chilling and benumbing atmosphere of London fashion. I ought perhaps first to have told you, that Lady H. *was* the honourable Mary Mackenzie, daughter of Lord Seaforth, and is the wife of Sir Samuel Hood, one of our most distinguished naval heroes, who goes out to take the command in your seas. Lastly, she is a very intimate friend of Mrs. Scott's and myself, and first gained my heart by her admiration of the Scenes of Infancy. So you see, my good friend, what your laziness would have cost you, if, listening rather to the dictates of revenge than generosity, I had withheld my pen from the ink-horn. But, to confess the truth, I fear two such minds would soon have found each other out, like good dancers in a ball-room, without the assistance of a master of ceremonies. So I may even play Sir Clement Cotterel with a good grace, since I cannot further my vengeance by withholding my good offices. My last went by favour of John Pringle,† who carried you a copy of the Lady of the Lake, a poem which I really think you will like better than Marmion on the whole, though not perhaps in particular passages. Pray let me know if it carried you back to the land of mist and mountain?

"Lady Hood's departure being sudden, and your deserts not extraordinary (speaking as a correspondent), I have not time to write you much news. The best domestic intelligence is, that the Sheriff of Selkirkshire, his lease of Ashestiel being out, has purchased about 100 acres, extending along the banks of the Tweed just above the confluence of the Gala, and about three miles from Melrose. There, saith fame, he designs to bigg himself a bower—*sibi et amicis*—and happy will he be when India shall return you to a social meal at his cottage. The place looks at present very like 'poor Scotland's gear.' It consists of a bank and a haugh as poor and bare as Sir John Falstaff's regiment; though I fear, ere you come to see, the verdant screen I am about to spread over its nakedness will have in some degree removed this reproach. But it has a wild solitary air, and commands a splendid reach of the Tweed; and, to sum all in the words of Touchstone, 'it is a poor thing, but mine own.'

"Our little folks, whom you left infants, are now shooting fast forward to youth, and show some blood, as far as aptitude to learning is concerned. Charlotte and I are wearing on as easily as this fashious world will permit. The outside of my head is waxing grizzled, but I cannot find that this snow has cooled either my brain or my heart.—Adieu, dear Leyden!—Pray, brighten the chain of friendship by a letter when occasion serves; and believe me ever yours, most affectionately,

Walter Scott."

On the 28th of August, 1811, just three days after this letter was penned, John Leyden died. On the very day when Scott was writing it, he, having accompanied the Governor-General, Lord Minto, on the expedition against Java, dashed into the surf, that he might be the first Briton in the armament who should set foot on the island.

"When," says Scott, in his Sketch of Leyden's Life, "the well-concerted movements of the invaders had given them possession of the town of Batavia, he displayed the same ill-omened precipitation in his haste to examine a library, or rather warehouse of books, in which many Indian MSS. of value were said to be deposited. The apartment had not been regularly ventilated, and either from this circumstance, or already affected by the fatal sickness peculiar to Batavia, Leyden, when he left the place, had a fit of shivering, and declared the atmosphere was enough to give any mortal a fever. The presage was too just. He took to his bed and died in three days, on the eve of the battle which gave Java to the British empire—

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* A Malay crease, now at Abbotsford.

† A son of Mr. Pringle of Whytbank.

Grata quies patriæ, sed et omnis terra sepulchrum.' "[*]

The packet in which Lady Hood, on her arrival in India, announced this event, and returned Scott's unopened letter, contained also a very touching one from the late Sir John Malcolm, who, although he had never at that time seen the poet, assumed, as a brother Borderer lamenting a common friend, the language of old acquaintanceship; and to this Scott replied in the same style which, from their first meeting in the autumn of the next year, became that, on both sides, of warm and respectful attachment. I might also speak in the like tenor of a third letter in the same melancholy packet, from another enthusiastic admirer of Leyden, Mr. Henry Ellis,[†] who also communicated to Scott his spirited stanzas on that untimely fate; but his personal intercourse with this distinguished diplomatist took place at a later period.

Before passing from the autumn of 1811, I may mention, that the letter of James Hogg, from which I have quoted an expression of regret as to Ashestiel, was one of many from the Shepherd bearing about this date, which Scott esteemed worthy of preservation. Strange as the fact may appear, Hogg, on the other hand, seems to have preserved none of the answers; but the half of the correspondence is quite sufficient to show how constantly and earnestly, in the midst of his own expanding toils and interests, Scott had continued to watch over the struggling fortunes of the wayward and imprudent Shepherd. His letters to the different members of the Buccleuch family at this time are full of the same subject. I shall insert one, addressed, on the 24th of August, to the Countess of Dalkeith, along with a presentation copy of Hogg's "Forest Minstrel." It appears to me a remarkable specimen of the simplest natural feelings on more subjects than one, couched in a dialect which, in any hands but the highest, is apt to become a cold one:—

"Ashestiel, Aug. 24, 1811.

"Dear Lady Dalkeith,

"The Ettrick Bard, who compiled the enclosed collection, which I observe is inscribed to your Ladyship, has made it his request that I would transmit a copy for your acceptance. I fear your Ladyship will find but little amusement in it; for the poor fellow has just talent sufficient to spoil him for his own trade, without having enough to support him by literature. But I embrace the more readily an opportunity of intruding upon your Ladyship's leisure, that I might thank you for the very kind and affecting letter with which you honoured me some time ago. You do me justice in believing that I was deeply concerned at the irreparable loss you sustained in the dear and hopeful boy[‡] to whom all the friends of the Buccleuch family looked forward with so much confidence. I can safely say, that since that inexpressible misfortune, I almost felt as if the presence of one, with whom the recollection of past happiness might in some degree be associated, must have awakened and added to your Ladyship's distress, from a feeling that scenes of which we were not to speak, were necessarily uppermost in the recollection of both. But your Ladyship knows better than I can teach, that, where all common topics of consolation would be inapplicable, Heaven provides for us the best and most effectual lenitive in the progress of time, and in the constant and unremitting discharge of the duties incumbent on the station in which we are placed. Those of your Ladyship are important, in proportion to the elevation of your rank, and the promising qualities of the young minds which I have with so much pleasure seen you forming and instructing to be comforts, I trust, to yourself, and an honour to society. Poor Lady Rosslyn† is gone, with all the various talent and vivacity that rendered her society so delightful. I regret her loss the more, as she died without ever making up some unkindness she had towards me for these foolish politics. It is another example of the great truth, that life is too short for the indulgence of animosity. I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, your Ladyship's obliged and very humble servant,

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[*] This little biography of Leyden is included in Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. iv. p. 137.

[†] Now the Right Honourable Henry Ellis, appointed, in 1836, ambassador from the Court of St. James's to the Shah of Persia.

[‡] Lord Scott. See *ante*, p. 302.

WALTER SCOTT."

The Countess, in acknowledgment of the dedication of the Forest Minstrel, sent Hogg, through Scott's hands, the donation of a hundred guineas—a sum which, to him, in those days, must have seemed a fortune; but which was only the pledge and harbinger of still more important benefits conferred soon after her Ladyship's husband became the head of his house.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE POEM OF ROKEBY BEGUN—CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. MORRITT—DEATH OF HENRY DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—GEORGE ELLIS—JOHN WILSON—APPRENTICES OF EDINBURGH—SCOTT'S "NICK-NACKATORIES"—LETTER TO MISS BAILLIE ON THE PUBLICATION OF CHILDE HAROLD—CORRESPONDENCE WITH LORD BYRON.—1811-1812.

OF the £4000 which Scott paid for the original farm of Abbotsford, he borrowed one half from his eldest brother, Major John Scott; the other moiety was raised by the Ballantynes, and advanced on the security of the as yet unwritten, though long meditated poem of Rokeby. He immediately, I believe by Terry's counsel, requested Mr. Stark of Edinburgh, an architect of whose talents he always spoke warmly, to give him a design for an ornamental cottage in the style of the old English vicarage-house. But before this could be done, Mr. Stark died; and Scott's letters will show how, in the sequel, his building plans, checked for a season by this occurrence, gradually expanded,—until twelve years afterwards the site was occupied not by a cottage but a castle.

His first notions are sketched as follows, in a letter addressed to Mr. Morritt very shortly after the purchase.

"We stay at Ashestiel this season, but migrate the next to our new settlements. I have fixed only two points respecting my intended cottage—one is, that it shall be *in* my garden, or rather kailyard—the other, that the little drawing-room shall open into a little conservatory, in which conservatory there shall be a fountain.

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* The Countess of Rosslyn, born Lady Harriet Bouverie, a very intimate friend of Lady Dalkeith, died 8th August, 1810. She had, as has been mentioned before, written to Scott, resenting somewhat warmly his song at the Melville dinner. See *ante*, p. 279.

These are articles of taste which I have long since determined upon; but I hope before a stone of my paradise is begun we shall meet and collogue upon it."

Three months later (December 20th, 1811), he opens the design of his new poem in another letter to the squire of Rokeby, whose household, it appears, had just been disturbed by the unexpected *accouchment* of a fair visitant. The allusion to the Quarterly Review, towards the close, refers to an humorous article on Sir John Sinclair's pamphlets about the Bullion Question—a joint production of Mr. Ellis and Mr. Canning.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq.

"My dear Morritt,

"I received your kind letter a week or two ago. The little interlude of the bantling at Rokeby reminds me of a lady whose mother happened to produce her upon very short notice, between the hands of a game at whist, and who, from a joke of the celebrated David Hume, who was one of the players, lived long distinguished by the name of *The Parenthesis*. My wife had once nearly made a similar blunder in very awkward circumstances. We were invited to dine at Melville Castle (to which we were then near neighbours), with the Chief Baron* and his lady, its temporary inhabitants,—when behold, the Obadiah whom I despatched two hours before dinner from our cottage to summon the Dr. Slop of Edinburgh, halting at Melville Lodge to rest his wearied horse, make apologies, and so forth, encountered the Melville Castle Obadiah sallying on the identical errand, for the identical man of skill, who, like an active knight-errant, relieved the two distressed dames within three hours of each other. A blessed duet they would have made if they had put off their crying bout, as it is called, till they could do it in concert.

"And now, I have a grand project to tell you of. Nothing less than a fourth romance, in verse; the theme, during the English civil wars of Charles I., and the scene, your own domain of Rokeby. I want to build my cottage a little better than my limited finances will permit out of my ordinary income; and although it is very true that an author should not hazard his reputation, yet, as Bob Acres says, I really think Reputation should take some care of the gentleman in return. Now, I have all your scenery deeply imprinted in my memory, and moreover, be it known to you, I intend to refresh its traces this ensuing summer, and to go as far as the borders of Lancashire, and the caves of Yorkshire, and so perhaps on to Derbyshire. I have sketched a story which pleases me, and I am only anxious to keep my theme quiet, for its being piddled upon by some of your *Ready-to-catch* literati, as John Bunyan calls them, would be a serious misfortune to me. I am not without hope of seducing you to be my guide a little way on my tour. Is there not some book (sense or nonsense, I care not) on the beauties of Teesdale—I mean a descriptive work? If you can point it out or lend it me, you will do me a great favour, and no less if you can tell me any traditions of the period. By which party was Bernard Castle occupied? It strikes me that it should be held for the Parliament. Pray, help me in this, by truth, or fiction, or tradition,—I care not which, if it be picturesque. What the deuce is the name of that wild glen, where we had such a clamber on horseback up a stone staircase?—Cat's Cradle, or Cat's Castle, I think it was. I wish also to have the true edition of the traditionary tragedy of your old house at Mortham, and the ghost thereunto appertaining, and you will do me yeoman's service in compiling the relics of so valuable a legend. Item—Do you know any thing of a striking ancient castle belonging, I think, to the Duke of Leeds, called Coningsburgh?† Grose notices it, but in a very flimsy manner. I once flew past it on the mail-coach, when its round tower and flying buttresses had a most romantic effect in the morning dawn.

"The Quarterly is beyond my praise, and as much beyond me as I was beyond that of my poor old nurse who died the other day. Sir John Sinclair has gotten the gold fleece at last. Dogberry would not desire a richer reward for having been written down an ass. £6000 a-year![†] Good faith, the whole reviews in Britain should rail at me, with my free consent, better cheap by at least a cypher. There is no chance, with all my engagements, to be at London this spring. My little boy Walter is ill with the measles, and I expect the rest to catch the disorder, which appears, thank God, very mild. Mrs. Scott joins in kindest compliments to Mrs. Morritt,—many merry Christmases to you—and believe me, truly yours,

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* The late Right Honourable Robert Dundas, Chief Baron of the Scotch Court of Exchequer.

† See note, Ivanhoe, *Waverley Novels*, vol. xvii. pp. 335–339.

WALTER SCOTT."

I insert Mr. Morritt's answer, both for the light which it throws on various particular passages in the poem as we have it, and because it shows that some of those features in the general plan, which were unfavourably judged on its publication, had been early and very strongly recommended to the poet's own consideration by the person whom, on this occasion, he was most anxious to please.

To Walter Scott, Esq.

"Rokeby, 28th December, 1811.

"My dear Scott,

"I begin at the top of my paper, because your request must be complied with, and I foresee that a letter on the antiquities of Teesdale will not be a short one. Your project delights me much, and I willingly contribute my mite to its completion. Yet, highly as I approve of the scene where you lay the events of your romance, I have, I think, some observations to make as to the period you have chosen for it. Of this, however, you will be a better judge after I have detailed my antiquarian researches. Now, as to Barnard Castle, it was built in Henry I.'s time, by Barnard, son of Guy Baliol, who landed with the Conqueror. It remained with the Baliols till their attainder by Edward I. The tomb of Alan of Galloway was here in Leland's time; and he gives the inscription. Alan, if you remember, married Margaret of Huntingdon, David's daughter, and was father, by her, of Devorgild, who married John Baliol, and from whom her son, John Baliol, claimed the crown of Scotland.. Edward I. granted the castle and liberties to Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick; it descended (with that title) to the Nevills, and by Ann Nevill to Richard Duke of Gloucester, afterwards King Richard III. It does not appear to whom Henry VII. or his son re-granted it, but it fell soon into the hands of the Nevills, Earls of Westmoreland, by whom it was forfeited in the rising of the North. It was granted by James I. to the citizens of London, from whom Sir Henry Vane received it by purchase. It does not seem to have ever been used as a place of strength after the rising of the North; and when the Vanes bought it of the citizens, it was probably in a dismantled state. It was, however, a possession of the Vanes before the Civil Wars, and, therefore, with a safe conscience you may swear it stood for the Parliament. The lady for whose ghost you enquire at Rokeby, has been so buried in uncertainty, you may make what you like of her. The most interesting fiction makes her the heiress of the Rokebys, murdered in the woods of the Greta by a greedy collateral who inherited the estate. She reached the house before she expired, and her blood was extant in my younger days at Mortham tower. Others say it was a Lady Rokeby, the wife of the owner, who was shot in the walks by robbers; but she certainly became a ghost, and, under the very poetic *nom de guerre* of Mortham Dobby, she appeared dressed as a fine lady, with a piece of white silk trailing behind her—without a head, indeed (though no tradition states how she lost so material a member), but with many of its advantages, for she had long hair on her shoulders—and eyes, nose, and mouth, in her breast. The parson, once, by talking Latin to her, confined her under the bridge that crosses the Greta at my dairy, but the arch being destroyed by floods in 1771, became incapable of containing a ghost any longer, and she was seen after that time by some of the older parishioners. I often heard of her in my early youth, from a sibyl who lived in the park to the age of 105, but since her death I believe the history has become obsolete.

[†] Shortly after the appearance of the article alluded to, Sir John Sinclair was appointed cashier of Excise for Scotland. "It should be added," says his biographer, "that the emoluments of the situation were greatly reduced at the death of Sir James Grant, his predecessor."—*Quarterly Journal of Agriculture, September* 1836, p. 125.

"The Rokebys were at all times loyal, at least from Henry IV. downward. They lived early at Mortham tower, which was, I believe, a better building than the tower of Rokeby, for here also was one where my house now stands. I fancy they got Mortham by marriage.* Colonel Rokeby, the last possessor of the old blood, was ruined in the Civil Wars by his loyalty and unthriftiness, and the estates were bought by the Robinsons, one of whom, the *long* Sir Thomas Robinson, so well-known and well-quizzed in the time of our grandfathers, after laying out most of the estate on this place, sold the place and the estate together to my father in 1769. Oliver Cromwell paid a visit to Barnard Castle in his way from Scotland, October, 1648. He does not seem to have been in the castle, but lodged in the town, whence I conclude the castle was then uninhabitable. Now I would submit to you whether, considering the course of events, it would not be expedient to lay the time of your romance as early as the War of the Roses. For, 1st. As you seem to hint that there will be a ghost or two in it, like the King of Bohemia's giants, they will be 'more out of the way.' 2d. Barnard Castle, at the time I propose, belonged to Nevills and Plantagenets, of whom something advantageous (according to your cavalier views) may be brought forward; whereas, a short time before the Civil Wars of the Parliament, the Vanes became possessors, and still remain so; of whom, if any Tory bard should be able to say any thing obliging, it will certainly be '*insigne, recens, adhuc indictum ore alio,*' and do honour to his powers of imagination. 3d. The knights of Rokeby itself were of high rank and fair domain at the earlier period, and were ruining themselves ignobly at the other. 4th. Civil war for civil war; the first had two poetical sides, and the last only one; for the round-heads, though I always thought them politically right, were sad materials for poetry: even Milton cannot make much of them. I think no time suits so well with a romance, of which the scene lies in this country, as the Wars of the two Roses—unless you sing the rising of the North; and then you will abuse Queen Elizabeth, and be censured as an abettor of Popery. How you would be involved in political controversy—with all our Whigs, who are anti-Stuarts; and all our Tories, who are anti-Papistical! I therefore see no alternative but boldly to venture back to the days of the holy King Harry; for, God knows, it is difficult to say any thing civil of us since that period. Consider, only, did not Cromwell himself pray that the Lord would deliver him from Sir Harry Vane? and what will you do with him!—still more, if you take into the account the improvements in and about the castle to which yourself was witness when we visited it together?†

"There is a book of a few pages, describing the rides through and about Teesdale; I have it not, but if I can get it I will send it. It is very bare of information, but gives names. If you can get the third volume of Hutchinson's History of Durham, it would give you some useful information, though very ill written. The glen where we clambered up to Cat-castle is itself called Deepdale. I fear we have few traditions that have survived the change of farms, and property of all sorts, which has long taken place in this neighbourhood. But we have some poetical names remaining, of which we none of us know the antiquity, or at least the origin. Thus, in the scamper we took from Deepdale and Cat-castle, we rode next, if you remember, to Cotherstone, an ancient village of the Fitzhughs on the Tees, whence I showed you a rock rising over the crown of the wood, still called Pendragon Castle. The river that joins the Tees at Cotherstone is yclept the Balder, I fancy in honour of the son of Odin; for the farm contiguous to it retains the name of Woden's Croft. The parish in which it stands is Romaldkirk, the church of St. Romald the hermit, and was once a hermitage itself in Teesdale forest. The parish next to Rokeby, on the Tees below my house, is Wycliff, where the old Reformer was born, and the day-star of the Reformation first rose on England. The family of Rokeby, who were the proprietors of this place, were valiant and knightly. They seem to have had good possessions at the Conquest (See Doomsday Book); in Henry III.'s reign they were Sheriffs of Yorkshire. In Edward II.'s reign, Froissart informs us, that, when the Scotch army decamped in the night so ingeniously from Weardale that nobody knew the direction of their march, a hue and cry was raised after them, and a reward of a hundred merks annual value in land was offered by the crown for whoever could discover them, and that de Rokeby—I think Sir Ralph—was the fortunate knight who ascertained their quarters on the moors near Hexham. In the time of Henry IV., the High-Sheriff of Yorkshire, who overthrew Northumberland and drove him to Scotland after the battle at Shrewsbury, was also a Rokeby. Tradition says that this sheriff was before this an adherent of the Percys, and was the identical knight who dissuaded Hotspur from the enterprise, on whose letter the angry warrior comments so freely in Shakspeare. They are indeed, I think, mentioned as adherents of the Percys in Chevy Chace, and fought under their banner; I hope, therefore, that they broke that connexion from pure patriotism, and not for filthy lucre. Such are all the annals that occur to me at present. If you will come here, we can summon a synod of the oldest women in the country, and you shall cross-examine them as much as you please. There are many romantic spots, and old names rather than remains of peels, and towers, once called castles, which belonged to Scroops, Fitzhughs, and Nevills, with which you should be intimate before you finish your poem,—and also the abbots and monks of Egglestone, who were old and venerable people, if you carry your story back into Romish times; and you will allow that the beauty of the situation deserves it, if you recollect the view from and near the bridge between me and Barnard Castle. Coningsburgh Castle, a noble building as you say, stands between Doncaster and Rotherham. I think it belongs to Lord Fitzwilliam, but am not sure. You may easily find the account of it in Grose, or any of the other antiquarians. The building is a noble circular tower, buttressed all round, and with walls of immoderate thickness. It is of a very early era, but I do not know its date.

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* The heiress of Mortham married Rokeby in the reign of Edward II.; and his own castle at Rokeby having been destroyed by the Scotch after the battle of Bannockburn, he built one on his wife's estate—the same of which considerable remains still exist—on the northern bank of the Greta.

† Mr. Morritt alludes to the mutilation of a curious vaulted roof of extreme antiquity, in the great tower of Barnard Castle, occasioned by its conversion into a manufactory of patent shot;—an *improvement* at which the Poet had expressed some indignation.

"I have almost filled my letter with antiquarianism; but will not conclude without repeating how much your intention has charmed us. The scenery of our rivers deserves to become classic ground, and I hope the scheme will induce you to visit and revisit it often. I will contrive to ride with you to Wenslydale and the Caves at least, and the border of Lancashire, &c. if I can; and to facilitate that trip, I hope you will bring Mrs. Scott here, that our dames may not be impatient of our absence. 'I know each dale, and every alley green,' between Rokeby and the Lakes and Caves, and have no scruple in recommending my own guidance, under which you will be far more likely to make discoveries than by yourself; for the people have many of them no knowledge of their own country. Should I, in consequence of your celebrity, be obliged to leave Rokeby from the influx of cockney romancers, artists, illustrators, and sentimental tourists, I shall retreat to Ashestiel, or to your new cottage, and thus visit on you the sins of your writings. At all events, however, I shall raise the rent of my inn at Greta bridge on the first notice of your book, as I hear the people at Callander have made a fortune by you. Pray give our kindest and best regards to Mrs. Scott, and believe me ever, dear Scott, yours very truly,

J. B. S. MORRITT."

In January, 1812, Scott entered upon the enjoyment of his proper salary as a clerk of Session, which, with his sheriffdom, gave him from this time till very near the close of his life, a professional income of £1600 a-year. On the 11th of the same month he lost his kind friend and first patron, Henry, third Duke of Buccleuch, and fifth of Queensberry. Both these events are mentioned in the following letter to Joanna Baillie, who, among other things, had told Scott that the materials for his purse were now on her table, and expressed her anxiety to know who was the author of some beautiful lines on the recent death of their friend, James Grahame, the poet of the Sabbath. These verses had, it appears, found their way anonymously into the newspapers.

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"January 17th, 1812.

"My dear Friend,

"The promise of the purse has flattered my imagination so very agreeably that I cannot help sending you an ancient silver mouth-piece, to which, if it pleases your taste, you may adapt your intended labours: this, besides, is a genteel way of tying you down to your promise; and to bribe you still farther, I assure you it shall not be put to the purpose of holding bank-notes or vulgar bullion, but reserved as a place of deposit for some of my pretty little medals and nicknackatories. When I do make another poetical effort, I shall certainly expect the sum you mention from the booksellers, for they have had too good bargains of me hitherto, and I fear I shall want a great deal of money to make my cottage exactly what I should like it. Mean while, between ourselves, my income has been very much increased since I wrote to you, in a different way. My predecessor in the office of Clerk of Session retired to make room for me, on the amiable condition of retaining all the emoluments during his life, which, from my wish to retire from the bar and secure a certain though distant income, I was induced to consent to; and considering his advanced age and uncertain health, the bargain was really not a bad one. But alas! like Sindbad's old man of the sea, my coadjutor's strength increased prodigiously after he had fairly settled himself on my shoulders, so that after five years' gratuitous labour I began to tire of my burden. Fortunately, Mr. Bankes' late superannuation act provides a rateable pension for office-holders obliged to retire after long and faithful services; and my old friend very handsomely consented to be transferred from my galled shoulders to the broad back of the public, although he is likely to sustain a considerable diminution of income by the exchange, to which he has declared himself willing to submit as a penalty for having lived longer than he or I expected. To me it will make a difference of £1300 a-year, no trifle to us who have no wish to increase our expense in a single particular, and who could support it on our former income without inconvenience. This I tell you in confidence, because I know you will be very well pleased with any good fortune which comes in my way. Every body who cares a farthing for poetry is delighted with your volume, and well they may. You will neither be shocked nor surprised at hearing that Mr. Jeffrey has announced himself of a contrary opinion. So, at least, I understand, for our very ideas of what is poetry differ so widely, that we rarely talk upon these subjects. There is something in his mode of reasoning that leads me greatly to doubt whether, notwithstanding the vivacity of his imagination, he really has any *feeling* of poetical genius, or whether he has worn it all off by perpetually sharpening his wit on the grindstone of criticism.

"I am very glad that you met my dear friend, George Ellis,—a wonderful man, who, through the life of a statesman and politician, conversing with princes, wits, fine ladies, and fine gentlemen, and acquainted with all the intrigues and tracasseries of the cabinets and *ruelles* of foreign courts, has yet retained all warm and kindly feelings which render a man amiable in society, and the darling of his friends.

"The author of the elegy upon poor Grahame, is John Wilson, a young man of very considerable poetical powers. He is now engaged in a poem called the *Isle of Palms*, something in the style of Southey. He is an eccentric genius, and has fixed himself upon the banks of Windermere, but occasionally resides in Edinburgh, where he now is. Perhaps you have seen him;—his father was a wealthy Paisley manufacturer—his mother a sister of Robert Sym. He seems an excellent, warm-hearted, and enthusiastic young man; something too much, perhaps, of the latter quality, places him among the list of originals.

"Our streets in Edinburgh are become as insecure as your houses in Wapping. Only think of a formal association among nearly fifty apprentices, aged from twelve to twenty, to scour the streets and knock down and rob all whom they found in their way. This they executed on the last night of the year with such spirit, that two men have died, and several others are dangerously ill, from the wanton treatment they received. The watchword of these young heroes when they met with resistance was—*Mar him*, a word of dire import; and which, as they were all armed with bludgeons loaded with lead, and were very savage, they certainly used in the sense of Ratcliffe Highway. The worst of all this is not so much the immediate evil, which a severe example* will probably check for the present, as that the formation and existence of such an association, holding regular meetings and keeping regular minutes, argues a woful negligence in the masters of these boys, the tradesmen and citizens of Edinburgh, of that wholesome domestic discipline which they ought, in justice to God and to man, to exercise over the youth intrusted to their charge; a negligence which cannot fail to be productive of every sort of vice, crime, and folly, among boys of that age.

"Yesterday I had the melancholy task of attending the funeral of the good old Duke of Buccleuch. It was, by his own direction, very private; but scarce a dry eye among the assistants—a rare tribute to a person whose high rank and large possessions removed him so far out of the social sphere of private friendship. But the Duke's mind was moulded upon the kindliest and most single-hearted model, and arrested the affections of all who had any connexion with him. He is truly a great loss to Scotland, and will be long missed and lamented, though the successor to his rank is heir also to his generous spirit and affections. He was my kind friend. Ever yours,

W. SCOTT."

The next of his letters to Joanna Baillie is curious, as giving his first impressions on reading Childe Harold. It contains also a striking sketch of the feelings he throughout life expressed, as to what he had observed of society in London—with a not less characteristic display of some of his own minor amusements.

To Miss Joanna Baillie.

"Ashestiel, April 4th, 1812.

"I ought not, even in modern gratitude, which may be moved by the gift of a purse, much less in minstrel sympathy, which values it more as your work than if it were stuffed with guineas, to have delayed thanking you, my kind friend, for such an elegant and acceptable token of your regard. My kindest and best thanks also attend the young lady who would not permit the purse to travel untenanted.† I shall be truly glad when I can offer them in person, but of that there is no speedy prospect. I don't believe I shall see London this great while again, which I do not much regret, were it not that it postpones the pleasure of seeing you and about half-a-dozen other friends. Without having any of the cant of loving retirement, and solitude, and rural pleasures, and so forth, I really have no great pleasure in the general society of London; I have never been there long enough to attempt any thing like living in my own way, and the immense length of the streets separates the objects you are interested in so widely from each other, that three parts of your time are past in endeavouring to dispose of the fourth to some advantage. At Edinburgh, although in general society we are absolute mimics of London, and imitate them equally in late hours, and in the strange precipitation with which we hurry from one place to another, in search of the society which we never sit still to enjoy, yet still people may manage their own parties and motions their own way. But all this is limited to my own particular circumstances,—for in a city like London, the constant resident has beyond all other places the power of conducting himself exactly as he likes. Whether this is entirely to be wished or not may indeed be doubted. I have seldom felt myself so fastidious about books, as in the midst of a large library, where one is naturally tempted to imitate the egregious epicure who condescended to take only one bite out of the sunny side of a peach. I suspect something of scarcity is necessary to make you devour the intellectual banquet with a good relish and digestion, as we know to be the case with respect to corporeal sustenance. But to quit all this egotism, which is as little as possible to the purpose, you must be informed that Erskine has enshrined your letter among his household papers of the most precious kind. Among your thousand admirers you have not a warmer or more kindly heart; he tells me Jeffrey talks very favourably of this volume. I should be glad, for his own sake, that he took some opportunity to retrace the paths of his criticism; but after pledging himself so deeply as he has done, I doubt much his giving way even unto conviction. As to my own share, I am labouring sure enough, but I have not yet got on the right path where I can satisfy myself I shall go on with courage, for diffidence does not easily beset me, and the public, still more than the ladies, 'stoop to the forward and the bold;' but then in either case, I fancy, the suitor for favour must be buoyed up by some sense of deserving it, whether real or supposed. The celebrated apology of Dryden for a passage which he could not defend, 'that he knew when he wrote it, it was bad enough to succeed,' was, with all deference to his memory, certainly invented to justify the fact after it was committed.

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* Three of these lads, all under eighteen years of age, were executed on the scene of one of the murders here alluded to, April the 22d, 1812. Their youth and penitence excited the deepest compassion; but never certainly was a severe example more necessary.

† The purse contained an old coin from Joanna Baillie's niece, the daughter of the Doctor.

"Have you seen the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold, by Lord Byron? It is, I think, a very clever poem, but gives no good symptom of the writer's heart or morals; his hero, notwithstanding the affected antiquity of the style in some parts, is a modern man of fashion and fortune, worn out and satiated with the pursuits of dissipation, and although there is a caution against it in the preface, you cannot for your soul avoid concluding that the author, as he gives an account of his own travels, is also doing so in his own character. Now really this is too bad; vice ought to be a little more modest, and it must require impudence at least equal to the noble Lord's other powers, to claim sympathy gravely for the ennui arising from his being tired of his wassailers and his paramours. There is a monstrous deal of conceit in it too, for it is informing the inferior part of the world that their little old-fashioned scruples of limitation are not worthy of his regard, while his fortune and possessions are such as have put all sorts of gratification too much in his power to afford him any pleasure. Yet with all this conceit and assurance, there is much poetical merit in the book, and I wish you would read it.

"I *have* got Rob Roy's gun, a long Spanish-barrelled piece, with his initials, R. M. C., for Robert Macgregor Campbell, which latter name he assumed in compliment to the Argyle family, who afforded him a good deal of private support, because he was a thorn in the side of their old rival house of Montrose. I have, moreover, a relic of a more heroic character; it is a sword which was given to the great Marquis of Montrose by Charles I., and appears to have belonged to his father, our gentle King Jamie. It had been preserved for a long time at Gartmore, but the present proprietor was selling his library, or great part of it, and John Ballantyne, the purchaser, wishing to oblige me, would not conclude a bargain, which the gentleman's necessity made him anxious about, till he flung the sword into the scale; it is, independent of its other merits, a most beautiful blade. I think a dialogue between this same sword and Rob Roy's gun, might be composed with good effect.

"We are here in a most extraordinary pickle—considering that we have just entered upon April, when according to the poet, 'primroses paint the gay plain,' instead of which both hill and valley are doing penance in a sheet of snow of very respectable depth. Mail-coaches have been stopt—shepherds, I grieve to say, lost in the snow; in short, we experience all the hardships of a January storm at this late period of the spring; the snow has been near a fortnight, and if it departs with dry weather, we may do well enough, but if wet weather should ensue, the wheat crop through Scotland will be totally lost. My thoughts are anxiously turned to the Peninsula, though I think the Spaniards have but one choice, and that is to choose Lord Wellington dictator; I have no doubt he could put things right yet. As for domestic politics, I really give them very little consideration. Your friends, the Whigs, are angry enough, I suppose, with the Prince Regent, but those who were most apt to flatter his follies, have little reason to complain of the usage they have met with—and he may probably think that those who were true to the father in his hour of calamity, may have the best title to the confidence of the son. The excellent private character of the old King gave him great advantages as the head of a free government. I fear the Prince will long experience the inconveniences of not having attended to his own. Mrs. Siddons, as fame reports, has taken another engagement at Covent Garden: surely she is wrong; she should have no twilight, but set in the full possession of her powers.*

"I hope Campbell's plan of lectures will answer.† I think the brogue may be got over, if he will not trouble himself by attempting to correct it, but read with fire and feeling; he is an animated reciter, but I never heard him read.

"I have a great mind, before sealing this long scrawl, to send you a list of the contents of the purse as they at present stand,

"1st. Miss Elizabeth Baillie's purse-penny, called by the learned a denarius of the Empress Faustina.

"2d. A gold brooch, found in a bog in Ireland, which, for aught I know, fastened the mantle of an Irish Princess in the days of Cuthullin, or Neal of the nine hostages.

"3d. A toadstone—a celebrated amulet, which was never lent to any one unless upon a bond for a thousand merks for its being safely restored. It was sovereign for protecting new-born children and their mothers from the power of the fairies, and has been repeatedly borrowed from my mother, on account of this virtue.

"4th. A coin of Edward I., found in Dryburgh Abbey.

"5th. A funeral ring, with Dean Swift's hair.

"So you see my nicknackatory is well supplied, though the purse is more valuable than all its contents.

"Adieu, my dear friend: Mrs. Scott joins in kind respects to your sister, the Doctor, and Mrs. Baillie,

WALTER SCOTT."

A month later, the Edinburgh Review on Lord Byron's Romaunt having just appeared, Scott says to Mr. Morritt (May 12),—

"I agree very much in what you say of Childe Harold. Though there is something provoking and insulting to morality and to feeling in his misanthropical ennui, it gives, nevertheless, an odd piquancy to his descriptions and reflections. This is upon the whole a piece of most extraordinary power, and may rank its author with our first poets. I see the Edinburgh Review has hauled its wind."

Lord Byron was, I need not say, the prime object of interest this season in the fashionable world of London; nor did the Prince Regent owe the subsequent hostilities of the noble Poet to any neglect on his part of the brilliant genius which had just been fully revealed in the Childe Harold. Mr. Murray, the publisher of the Romaunt, on hearing, on the 29th of June, Lord Byron's account of his introduction to his Royal Highness, conceived that, by communicating it to Scott, he might afford the opportunity of such a personal explanation between his two poetical friends, as should obliterate on both sides whatever painful feelings had survived the offensive allusions to Marmion in the English Bards and Scotch Reviewers; and this good-natured step had the desired consequences. Mr. Moore says that the correspondence "begun in some enquiries which Mr. Scott addressed to Lord Byron on the subject of his interview with Royalty;"* but he would not have used that expression, had he seen the following letter:—

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* Mrs. Siddons made a farewell appearance at Covent Garden, as Lady Macbeth, on the 29th of June, 1812; but she afterwards resumed her profession for short intervals, more than once, and did not finally bid adieu to the stage until the 9th of June, 1819.

† Mr. Thomas Campbell had announced his first course of lectures on English Poetry about this time.

To the Right Honourable Lord Byron, &c. &c.
Care of John Murray, Esq., Fleet Street, London.

"Edinburgh, July 3d, 1812.

"My Lord,

"I am uncertain if I ought to profit by the apology which is afforded me, by a very obliging communication from our acquaintance, John Murray of Fleet Street, to give your Lordship the present trouble. But my intrusion concerns a large debt of gratitude due to your Lordship, and a much less important one of explanation, which I think I owe to myself, as I dislike standing low in the opinion of any person whose talents rank so highly in my own, as your Lordship's most deservedly do.

"The first *count*, as our technical language expresses it, relates to the high pleasure I have received from the Pilgrimage of Childe Harold, and from its precursors; the former, with all its classical associations, some of which are lost on so poor a scholar as I am, possesses the additional charm of vivid and animated description, mingled with original sentiment;—but besides this debt, which I owe your Lordship in common with the rest of the reading public, I have to acknowledge my particular thanks for your having distinguished by praise, in the work which your Lordship rather dedicated in general to satire, some of my own literary attempts. And this leads me to put your Lordship right in the circumstances respecting the sale of Marmion, which had reached you in a distorted and misrepresented form, and which, perhaps, I have some reason to complain, were given to the public without more particular enquiry. The poem, my Lord, was *not* written upon contract for a sum of money—though it is too true that it was sold and published in a very unfinished state, which I have since regretted, to enable me to extricate myself from some engagements which fell suddenly upon me, by the unexpected misfortunes of a very near relation. So that, to quote statute and precedent, I really come under the case cited by Juvenal, though not quite in the extremity of the classic author—

Esurit, intactam Paridi nisi vendit Agaven.

And so much for a mistake, into which your Lordship might easily fall, especially as I generally find it the easiest way of stopping sentimental compliments on the beauty, &c., of certain poetry, and the delights which the author must have taken in the composition, by assigning the readiest reason that will cut the discourse short, upon a subject where one must appear either conceited or affectedly rude and cynical.

"As for my attachment to literature, I sacrificed for the pleasure of pursuing it very fair chances of opulence and professional honours, at a time of life when I fully knew their value, and am not ashamed to say, that in deriving advantages in compensation from the partial favour of the public, I have added some comforts and elegancies to a bare independence. I am sure your Lordship's good sense will easily put this unimportant egotism to the right account, for—though I do not know the motive would make me enter into controversy with a fair or an *unfair* literary critic—I may be well excused for a wish to clear my personal character from any tinge of mercenary or sordid feeling in the eyes of a contemporary of genius. Your Lordship will likewise permit me to add, that you would have escaped the trouble of this explanation, had I not understood that the satire alluded to had been suppressed, not to be reprinted. For in removing a prejudice on your Lordship's own mind, I had no intention of making any appeal by or through you to the public, since my own habits of life have rendered my defence as to avarice or rapacity rather too easy.

"Leaving this foolish matter where it lies, I have to request your Lordship's acceptance of my best thanks for the flattering communication which you took the trouble to make Mr. Murray on my behalf, and which could not fail to give me the gratification, which I am sure you intended. I dare say our worthy bibliopolist overcoloured his report of your Lordship's conversation with the Prince Regent, but I owe my thanks to him nevertheless, for the excuse he has given me for intruding these pages on your Lordship. Wishing you health, spirit, and perseverance, to continue your pilgrimage through the interesting countries which you have still to pass with Childe Harold, I have the honour to be, my Lord, your Lordship's obedient servant,

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* Life and Works of Lord Byron, vol. ii. p. 155.

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S. Will your Lordship permit me a verbal criticism on Childe Harold, were it only to show I have read his Pilgrimage with attention? 'Nuestra Dama de la Pena' means, I suspect, not our Lady of Crime or Punishment, but our Lady of the Cliff; the difference is, I believe, merely in the accentuation of 'peña.'"

Lord Byron's answer was in these terms:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.

"St. James's Street, July 6, 1812.

"Sir,

"I have just been honoured with your letter.—I feel sorry that you should have thought it worth while to notice the evil works of my nonage, as the thing is suppressed *voluntarily*, and your explanation is too kind not to give me pain. The Satire was written when I was very young and very angry, and fully bent on displaying my wrath and my wit, and now I am haunted by the ghosts of my wholesale assertions. I cannot sufficiently thank you for your praise; and now, waiving myself, let me talk to you of the Prince Regent. He ordered me to be presented to him at a ball: and after some sayings, peculiarly pleasing from royal lips, as to my own attempts, he talked to me of you and your immortalities; he preferred you to every bard past and present, and asked which of your works pleased me most. It was a difficult question. I answered, I thought the Lay. He said his own opinion was nearly similar. In speaking of the others, I told him that I thought you more particularly the poet of *Princes*, as *they* never appeared more fascinating than in Marmion and the Lady of the Lake. He was pleased to coincide, and to dwell on the description of your Jameses as no less royal than poetical. He spoke alternately of Homer and yourself, and seemed well acquainted with both; so that (with the exception of the Turks and your humble servant) you were in very good company. I defy Murray to have exaggerated his Royal Highness's opinion of your powers, nor can I pretend to enumerate all he said on the subject; but it may give you pleasure to hear that it was conveyed in language which would only suffer by my attempting to transcribe it; and with a tone and taste which gave me a very high idea of his abilities and accomplishments, which I had hitherto considered as confined to *manners*, certainly superior to those of any living *gentleman*.

"This interview was accidental. I never went to the levee; for having seen the courts of Mussulman and Catholic sovereigns, my curiosity was sufficiently allayed: and my politics being as perverse as my rhymes, I had, in fact, no business there. To be thus praised by your Sovereign must be gratifying to you; and if that gratification is not alloyed by the communication being made through me, the bearer of it will consider himself very fortunately, and sincerely, your obliged and obedient servant,

BYRON.

"P. S.—Excuse this scrawl, scratched in a great hurry, and just after a journey."

Scott immediately replied as follows:—

To the Right Hon. Lord Byron, &c. &c. &c.

"Abbotsford, near Melrose, 16th July, 1812.

"My Lord,

"I am much indebted to your Lordship for your kind and friendly letter: and much gratified by the Prince Regent's good opinion of my literary attempts. I know so little of courts or princes, that any success I may have had in hitting off the Stuarts is, I am afraid, owing to a little old Jacobite leaven which I sucked in with the numerous traditionary tales that amused my infancy. It is a fortunate thing for the Prince himself that he has a literary turn, since nothing can so effectually relieve the ennui of state, and the anxieties of power.

"I hope your Lordship intends to give us more of Childe Harold. I was delighted that my friend Jeffrey—for such, in despite of many a feud, literary and political, I always esteem him—has made so handsomely the *amende honourable* for not having discovered in the bud the merits of the flower; and I am happy to understand that the retractation so handsomely made was received with equal liberality. These circumstances may perhaps some day lead you to revisit Scotland, which has a maternal claim upon you, and I need not say what pleasure I should have in returning my personal thanks for the honour you have done me. I am labouring here to contradict an old proverb, and make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, namely, to convert a bare *haugh* and *brae*, of about 100 acres, into a comfortable farm. Now, although I am living in a gardener's hut, and although the adjacent ruins of Melrose have little to tempt one who has seen those of Athens, yet, should you take a tour which is so fashionable at this season, I should be very happy to have an opportunity of introducing you to any thing remarkable in my fatherland. My neighbour, Lord Somerville, would, I am sure, readily supply the accommodations which I want, unless you prefer a couch in a closet, which is the utmost hospitality I have at present to offer. The fair, or shall I say the sage, Apreece that was, Lady Davy that is, is soon to show us how much science she leads captive in Sir Humphrey; so your Lordship sees, as the citizen's wife says in the farce—'Threadneedle Street has some charms,' since they procure us such celebrated visitants. As for me, I would rather cross-question your Lordship about the outside of Parnassus, than learn the nature of the contents of all the other mountains in the world. Pray, when under 'its cloudy canopy' did you hear any thing of the celebrated Pegasus? Some say he has been brought off with other curiosities to Britain, and now covers at Tattersal's. I would fain have a cross from him out of my little moss-trooper's Galloway, and I think your Lordship can tell me how to set about it, as I recognise his true paces in the high-mettled description of Ali Pacha's military court.

"A wise man said—or, if not, I, who am no wise man, now say, that there is no surer mark of regard than when your correspondent ventures to write nonsense to you. Having, therefore, like Dogberry, bestowed all my tediousness upon your Lordship, you are to conclude that I have given you a convincing proof that I am very much your Lordship's obliged and very faithful servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

From this time the epistolary intercourse between Scott and Byron continued to be kept up; and it erelong assumed a tone of friendly confidence equally honourable to both these great competitors, without rivalry, for the favour of the literary world.

The date of the letter last quoted immediately preceded that of Scott's second meeting with another of the most illustrious of his contemporaries. He had met Davy at Mr. Wordsworth's when in the first flush of his celebrity in 1804, and been, as one of his letters states, much delighted with "the simple and unaffected style of his bearing—the most agreeable characteristic of high genius." Sir Humphrey, now at the summit of his fame, had come, by his marriage with Scott's accomplished relation, into possession of an ample fortune; and he and his bride were among the first of the poet's visitants in the original cabin at Abbotsford.

The following letter is an answer to one in which Mr. Southey had besought Scott's good offices in behalf of an application which he thought of making to be appointed Historiographer Royal, in the room of Mr. Dutens, just dead. It will be seen that both poets regarded with much alarm the symptoms of popular discontent which appeared in various districts, particularly among the *Luddites*, as they were called, of Yorkshire, during the uncertain condition of public affairs consequent on the assassination of the Prime Minister, Mr. Perceval, by Bellingham, in the lobby of the House of Commons, on the 11th of May, 1812; and that Scott had, in his capacity of Sheriff, had his own share in suppressing the tumults of the only manufacturing town of Selkirkshire. The last sentence of the letter alludes to a hint dropped in the Edinburgh Review, that the author of the historical department of the Edinburgh Annual Register, ought to be called to the bar of the House of Commons, in consequence of the bold language in which he had criticised the parliamentary hostility of the Whigs to the cause of Spain.

To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick.

"Edinburgh, 4th June, 1812.

"My dear Southey,

"It is scarcely necessary to say that the instant I had your letter I wrote to the only friend I have in power, Lord Melville (if indeed he be now in power), begging him for the sake of his own character, for the remembrance of his father, who wished you sincerely well, and by every other objuration I could think of, to back your application. All I fear, if administration remain, is the influence of the clergy, who have a strange disposition to job away among themselves the rewards of literature. But I fear they are all to pieces above stairs, and much owing to rashness and mismanagement; for if they could not go on without Canning and Wellesley, they certainly should from the beginning have invited them in as companions, and not mere retainers. On the whole, that cursed compound of madness and villany has contrived to do his country more mischief at one blow than all her sages and statesmen will be able to repair perhaps in our day. You are quite right in apprehending a *Jacquerie;* the country is mined below our feet. Last week, learning that a meeting was to be held among the weavers of the large manufacturing village of Galashiels, for the purpose of cutting a man's web from his loom, I apprehended the ringleaders and disconcerted the whole project; but, in the course of my enquiries, imagine my surprise at discovering a bundle of letters and printed manifestoes, from which it appeared that the Manchester Weavers' Committee corresponds with every manufacturing town in the South and West of Scotland, and levies a subsidy of 2s. 6d. per man—(an immense sum)—for the ostensible purpose of petitioning Parliament for redress of grievances, but doubtless to sustain them in their revolutionary movements. An energetic administration, which had the confidence of the country, would soon check all this; but it is our misfortune to lose the pilot when the ship is on the breakers. But it is sickening to think of our situation.

"I can hardly think there could have been any serious intention of taking the hint of the Review, and yet *liberty* has so often been made the pretext of crushing its own best supporters, that I am always prepared to expect the most tyrannical proceedings from professed demagogues.

"I am uncertain whether the Chamberlain will be liable to removal—if not I should hope you may be pretty sure of your object. Believe me ever yours faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT.

"4th June—What a different birthday from those I have seen! It is likely I shall go to Rokeby for a few days this summer; and if so, I will certainly diverge to spend a day at Keswick."

Mr. Southey's application was unsuccessful—the office he wished for having been bestowed, as soon as it fell vacant, on a person certainly of vastly inferior literary pretensions—the late Rev. J. S. Clarke, D. D., private librarian to the Regent.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE "FLITTING" TO ABBOTSFORD—PLANTATIONS—GEORGE THOMSON—ROKEBY AND TRIERMAIN IN PROGRESS—EXCURSION TO FLODDEN—BISHOP AUCKLAND—AND ROKEBY PARK—CORRESPONDENCE WITH CRABBE—LIFE OF PATRICK CAREY, ETC.—PUBLICATION OF ROKEBY—AND OF THE BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.—1812-1813.

TOWARDS the end of May, 1812, the Sheriff finally removed from Ashestiel to Abbotsford. The day when this occurred was a sad one for many a poor neighbour—for they lost, both in him and his wife, very generous protectors. In such a place, among the few evils which counterbalance so many good things in the condition of the peasantry, the most afflicting is the want of access to medical advice. As far as their means and skill would go, they had both done their utmost to supply this want; and Mrs. Scott, in particular, had made it so much her business to visit the sick in their scattered cottages, and bestowed on them the contents of her medicine-chest as well as of the larder and cellar, with such unwearied kindness, that her name is never mentioned there to this day without some expression of tenderness. Scott's children remember the parting scene as one of unmixed affliction—but it had had, as we shall see, its lighter features.

Among the many amiable English friends whom he owed to his frequent visits at Rokeby Park, there was, I believe, none that had a higher place in his regard than the late Anne Lady Alvanley, the widow of the celebrated Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. He was fond of female society in general; but her ladyship was a woman after his heart; well born, and highly bred, but without the slightest tinge of the frivolities of modern fashion; soundly informed, and a warm lover of literature and the arts, but holding in as great horror as himself the imbecile chatter and affected ecstasies of the bluestocking generation. Her ladyship had written to him early in May, by Miss Sarah Smith (now Mrs. Bartley), whom I have already mentioned as one of his theatrical favourites; and his answer contains, among other matters, a sketch of the "Forest Flitting."

To the Right Honourable Lady Alvanley.

"Ashestiel, 25th, May 1812.

"I was honoured, my dear Lady Alvanley, by the kind letter which you sent me with our friend Miss Smith, whose talents are, I hope, receiving at Edinburgh the full meed of honourable applause which they so highly merit. It is very much against my will that I am forced to speak of them by report alone, for this being the term of removing, I am under the necessity of being at this farm to superintend the transference of my goods and chattels, a most miscellaneous collection, to a small property, about five miles down the Tweed, which I purchased last year. The neighbours have been much delighted with the procession of my furniture, in which old swords, bows, targets, and lances, made a very conspicuous show. A family of turkeys was accommodated within the helmet of some *preux* chevalier of ancient Border fame; and the very cows, for aught I know, were bearing banners and muskets. I assure your ladyship that this caravan, attended by a dozen of ragged rosy peasant children, carrying fishing-rods and spears, and leading poneys, greyhounds, and spaniels, would, as it crossed the Tweed, have furnished no bad subject for the pencil, and really reminded me of one of the gypsey groups of Callot upon their march.

"Edinburgh, 28th May.

"I have got here at length, and had the pleasure to hear Miss Smith speak the Ode on the Passions charmingly last night. It was her benefit, and the house was tolerable, though not so good as she deserves, being a very good girl, as well as an excellent performer.

"I have read Lord Byron with great pleasure, though pleasure is not quite the appropriate word. I should say admiration—mixed with regret, that the author should have adopted such an unamiable misanthropical tone.—The reconciliation with Holland-house is extremely edifying, and may teach young authors to be in no hurry to exercise their satirical vein. I remember an honest old Presbyterian, who thought it right to speak with respect even of the devil himself, since no one knew in what corner he might one day want a friend. But Lord Byron is young, and certainly has great genius, and has both time and capacity to make amends for his errors. I wonder if he will pardon the Edinburgh reviewers, who have read their recantation of their former strictures.

"Mrs. Scott begs to offer her kindest and most respectful compliments to your ladyship and the young ladies. I hope we shall get into Yorkshire this season to see Morritt: he and his lady are really delightful persons. Believe me, with great respect, dear Lady Alvanley, your much honoured and obliged

Walter Scott."

A week later, in answer to a letter, mentioning the approach of the celebrated sale of books in which the Roxburghe Club originated, Scott says to his trusty ally, Daniel Terry:—

"Edinburgh, 9th June, 1812.

"My dear Terry,

"I wish you joy of your success, which, although all reports state it as most highly flattering, does not exceed what I had hoped for you. I think I shall do you a sensible pleasure in requesting that you will take a walk over the fields to Hampstead one of these fine days, and deliver the enclosed to my friend Miss Baillie, with whom, I flatter myself, you will be much pleased, as she has all the simplicity of real genius. I mentioned to her some time ago that I wished to make you acquainted, so that the sooner you can call upon her the compliment will be the more gracious. As I suppose you will sometimes look in at the Roxburghe sale, a memorandum respecting any remarkable articles will be a great favour.

"Abbotsford was looking charming, when I was obliged to mount my wheel in this court, too fortunate that I have at length some share in the roast meat I am daily engaged in turning. Our flitting and removal from Ashestiel baffled all description; we had twenty-four cart-loads of the veriest trash in nature, besides dogs, pigs, poneys, poultry, cows, calves, bare-headed wenches, and bare-breeched boys. In other respects we are going on in the old way, only poor Percy is dead. I intend to have an old stone set up by his grave, with '*Cy gist li preux Percie*,' and I hope future antiquaries will debate which hero of the house of Northumberland has left his bones in Teviotdale.* Believe me yours very truly,

Walter Scott."

This was one of the busiest summers of Scott's busy life. Till the 12th of July he was at his post in the Court of Sessions five days every week; but every Saturday evening found him at Abbotsford, to observe the progress his labourers had made within doors and without in his absence; and on Monday night he returned to Edinburgh. Even before the Summer Session commenced he appears to have made some advances in his Rokeby, for he writes to Mr. Morritt, from Abbotsford, on the 4th of May—"As for the house and the poem, there are twelve masons hammering at the one and one poor noddle at the other—so they are both in progress;" and his literary labours throughout the long vacation were continued under the same sort of disadvantage. That autumn he had, in fact, no room at all for himself. The only parlour which had been hammered into any thing like habitable condition, served at once for dining-room, drawing-room, school-room, and study. A window looking to the river was kept sacred to his desk; an old bed-curtain was nailed up across the room close behind his chair, and there, whenever the spade, the dibble, or the chisel (for he took his full share in all the work on hand) was laid aside, he pursued his poetical tasks, apparently undisturbed and unannoyed by the surrounding confusion of masons and carpenters, to say nothing of the lady's small talk, the children's babble among themselves, or their repetition of their lessons. The truth no doubt was, that when at his desk he did little more, as far as regarded *poetry*, than write down the lines which he had fashioned in his mind while pursuing his vocation as a planter, upon that bank which received originally, by way of joke, the title of *the thicket*. "I am now," he says to Ellis (Oct. 17), "adorning a patch of naked land with trees, *facturis nepotibus umbram*, for I shall never live to enjoy their shade myself otherwise than in the recumbent posture of Tityrus or Menalcas." But he did live to see *the thicket* deserve not only that name, but a nobler one; and to fell with his own hand many a well-grown tree that he had planted there.

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* The epitaph of this favourite greyhound may be seen on the edge of the bank, a little way below the house of Abbotsford.

Another plantation of the same date, by his eastern boundary, was less successful. For this he had asked and received from his early friend, the Marchioness of Stafford, a supply of acorns from Trentham, and it was named in consequence *Sutherland bower;* but the field-mice, in the course of the ensuing winter, contrived to root up and devour the whole of her ladyship's goodly benefaction. A third space had been set apart, and duly enclosed, for the reception of some Spanish chestnuts offered to him by an admirer established in merchandise at Seville; but that gentleman had not been a very knowing ally as to such matters, for when the chestnuts arrived, it turned out that they had been boiled.

Scott writes thus to Terry, in September, while the Roxburghe sale was still going on:—

"I have lacked your assistance, my dear sir, for twenty whimsicalities this autumn. Abbotsford, as you will readily conceive, has considerably changed its face since the auspices of Mother Retford were exchanged for ours. We have got up a good garden wall, complete stables in the haugh, according to Stark's plan, and the old farm-yard being enclosed with a wall, with some little picturesque additions in front, has much relieved the stupendous height of the Doctor's barn. The new plantations have thriven amazingly well, the acorns are coming up fast, and Tom Purdie is the happiest and most consequential person in the world. My present work is building up the well with some *debris* from the Abbey. O for your assistance, for I am afraid we shall make but a botched job of it, especially as our materials are of a very miscellaneous complexion. The worst of all is, that while my trees grow and my fountain fills, my purse, in an inverse ratio, sinks to zero. This last circumstance will, I fear, make me a very poor guest at the literary entertainment your researches hold out for me. I should, however, like much to have the Treatise on Dreams, by the author of the New Jerusalem, which, as John Cuthbertson the smith said of the minister's sermon, must be neat work. The Loyal Poems by N. T. are probably by poor Nathan Tate, who associated with Brady in versifying the Psalms, and more honourably with Dryden in the second part of Absalom and Achitophel. I never saw them, however, but would give a guinea or thirty shillings for the collection. Our friend John Ballantyne has, I learn, made a sudden sally to London, and doubtless you will crush a quart with him or a pottle pot; he will satisfy your bookseller for 'The Dreamer,' or any other little purchase you may recommend for me. You have pleased Miss Baillie very much, both in public and in society, and though not fastidious, she is not, I think, particularly lavish of applause either way. A most valuable person is she, and as warm-hearted as she is brilliant.—Mrs. Scott and all our little folks are well. I am relieved of the labour of hearing Walter's lesson by a gallant son of the church, who, with one leg of wood, and another of oak, walks to and fro from Melrose every day for that purpose. Pray stick to the dramatic work,* and never suppose that you can be intrusive, or that I can be uninterested in whatever concerns you. Yours, W. S."

The tutor alluded to at the close of this letter was Mr. George Thomson, a son of the minister of Melrose, who, when the house afforded better accommodation, was, and continued for many years to be, domesticated at Abbotsford. Scott had always a particular tenderness towards persons afflicted with any bodily misfortune; and Thomson, whose leg had been amputated in consequence of a rough casualty of his boyhood, had a special share in his favour from the high spirit with which he refused at the time to betray the name of the companion that had occasioned his mishap, and continued ever afterwards to struggle against its disadvantages. Tall, vigorous, athletic, a dauntless horseman, and expert at the singlestick, George formed a valuable as well as picturesque addition to the *tail* of the new laird, who often said, "In the Dominie, like myself, accident has spoiled a capital life-guardsman." His many oddities and eccentricities in no degree interfered with the respect due to his amiable feelings, upright principles, and sound learning; nor did *Dominie Thamson* at all quarrel in after times with the universal credence of the neighbourhood, that he had furnished many features for the inimitable personage whose designation so nearly resembled his own; and if he has not yet "wagged his head" in a "pulpit o' his ain," he well knows it has not been so for want of earnest and long-continued intercession on the part of the author of Guy Mannering.

For many years Scott had accustomed himself to proceed in the composition of poetry along with that of prose essays of various descriptions; but it is a remarkable fact that he chose this period of perpetual noise and bustle, when he had not even a summer-house to himself, for the new experiment of carrying on two poems at the same time—and this too without suspending the heavy labour of his edition of Swift, to say nothing of the various lesser matters in which the Ballantynes were, from day to day, calling for the assistance of his judgment and his pen. In the same letter in which William Erskine acknowledges the receipt of the first four pages of Rokeby, he adverts also to the Bridal of Triermain as being already in rapid progress. The fragments of this second poem, inserted in the Register of the preceding year, had attracted considerable notice; the secret of their authorship had been well kept; and by some means, even in the shrewdest circles of Edinburgh, the belief had become prevalent that they proceeded not from Scott but from Erskine. Scott had no sooner completed his bargain as to the copyright of the unwritten Rokeby, than he resolved to pause from time to time in its composition, and weave those fragments into a shorter and lighter romance, executed in a different metre, and to be published anonymously, in a small pocket volume, as nearly as possible on the same day with the avowed quarto. He expected great amusement from the comparisons which the critics would no doubt indulge themselves in drawing between himself and this humble candidate; and Erskine good-humouredly entered into the scheme, undertaking to do nothing which should effectually suppress the notion of his having set himself up as a modest rival to his friend. Nay, he suggested a further refinement, which in the sequel had no small share in the success of this little plot upon the sagacity of the reviewers. Having said that he much admired the opening of the first canto of Rokeby, Erskine adds,

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* An edition of the British Dramatists had, I believe, been projected by Mr. Terry.

> "I shall request your *Accoucheur* to send me your *little Dugald* too, as he gradually makes his progress. What I have seen is delightful. You are aware how difficult it is to form any opinion of a work, the general plan of which is unknown, transmitted merely in legs and wings as they are formed and feathered. Any remarks must be of the most minute and superficial kind, confined chiefly to the language, and other such subordinate matters. I shall be very much amused if the secret is kept and the knowing ones taken in. To prevent any discovery from your prose, what think you of putting down your ideas of what the preface ought to contain, and allowing me to write it over? And perhaps a quizzing review might be concocted."

This last hint was welcome; and among other parts of the preface to Triermain which threw out "the knowing ones," certain Greek quotations interspersed in it are now accounted for. Scott, on his part, appears to have studiously interwoven into the piece allusions to personal feelings and experiences more akin to his friend's history and character than to his own; and he did so still more largely, when repeating this experiment, in the introductory parts of Harold the Dauntless.

The same post which conveyed William Erskine's letter above quoted, brought him an equally wise and kind one from Mr. Morritt, in answer to a fresh application for some minute details about the scenery and local traditions of the Valley of the Tees. Scott had promised to spend part of this autumn at Rokeby Park himself; but now, busied as he was with his planting operations at home, and continually urged by Ballantyne to have the poem ready for publication by Christmas, he would willingly have trusted his friend's knowledge in place of his own observation and research. Mr. Morritt gave him in reply various particulars, which I need not here repeat, but added,—

> "I am really sorry, my dear Scott, at your abandonment of your kind intention of visiting Rokeby—and my sorrow is not quite selfish—for seriously, I wish you could have come, if but for a few days, in order, on the spot, to settle accurately in your mind the localities of the new poem, and all their petty circumstances, of which there are many that would give interest and ornament to your descriptions. I am too much flattered by your proposal of inscribing the poem to me, not to accept it with gratitude and pleasure. I shall always feel your friendship as an honour—we all wish our honours to be permanent—and yours promises mine at least a fair chance of immortality. I hope, however, you will not be obliged to write in a hurry on account of the impatience of your booksellers. They are, I think, ill advised in their proceeding, for surely the book will be the more likely to succeed

from not being forced prematurely into this critical world. Do not be persuaded to risk your established fame on this hazardous experiment. If you want a few hundreds independent of these booksellers, your credit is so very good, now that you have got rid of your Old Man of the Sea, that it is no great merit to trust you, and I happen at this moment to have five or six for which I have no sort of demand—so rather than be obliged to spur Pegasus beyond the power of pulling him up when he is going too fast, do consult your own judgment and set the midwives of the trade at defiance. Don't be scrupulous to the disadvantage of your muse, and above all be not offended at me for a proposition which is meant in the true spirit of friendship. I am more than ever anxious for your success—the Lady of the Lake more than succeeded—I think Don Roderick is less popular—I want this work to be another Lady at the least. Surely it would be worth your while for such an object to spend a week of your time, and a portion of your Old Man's salary, in a mail-coach flight hither, were it merely to renew your acquaintance with the country, and to rectify the little misconceptions of a cursory view. Ever affectionately yours,

J. B. S. M."

This appeal was not to be resisted. Scott, I believe, accepted Mr. Morritt's friendly offer so far as to ask his assistance in having some of Ballantyne's bills discounted: and he proceeded the week after to Rokeby, by the way of Flodden and Hexham, travelling on horseback, his eldest boy and girl on their ponies, while Mrs. Scott followed them in the carriage. Two little incidents that diversified this ride through Northumberland have found their way into print already; but, as he was fond of telling them both down to the end of his days, I must give them a place here also. Halting at Flodden to expound the field of battle to his young folks, he found that Marmion had, as might have been expected, benefited the keeper of the public-house there very largely; and the village Boniface, overflowing with gratitude, expressed his anxiety to have a *Scott's Head* for his sign-post. The poet demurred to this proposal, and assured mine host that nothing could be more appropriate than the portraiture of a foaming tankard, which already surmounted his door-way. "Why, the painter-man has not made an ill job," said the landlord, "but I would fain have something more connected with the book that has brought me so much good custom." He produced a well-thumbed copy, and handing it to the author, begged he would at least suggest a motto from the Tale of Flodden Field. Scott opened the book at the death-scene of the hero, and his eye was immediately caught by the "inscription" in black letter—

"Drink, weary pilgrim, drink, and pray
For the kind soul of Sibyl Grey," &c.

"Well, my friend," said he, "what more would you have? You need but strike out one letter in the first of these lines, and make your painter-man, the next time he comes this way, print between the jolly tankard and your own name.

"Drink, weary pilgrim, drink, and PAY."

Scott was delighted to find, on his return, that this suggestion had been adopted, and for aught I know the romantic legend may still be visible.

The other story I shall give in the words of Mr. Gillies:—

"It happened at a small country town that Scott suddenly required medical advice for one of his servants, and, on enquiring if there was any doctor at the place, was

> told that there were two—one long established, and the other a new comer. The latter gentleman, being luckily found at home, soon made his appearance;—a grave, sagacious-looking personage, attired in black, with a shovel hat, in whom, to his utter astonishment, Sir Walter recognised a Scotch blacksmith, who had formerly practised, with tolerable success, as a veterinary operator in the neighbourhood of Ashestiel.—'How, in all the world!' exclaimed he, 'can it be possible that this is John Lundie?'—'In troth is it, your honour—just *a' that's for him.*'—'Well, but let us hear; you were a *horse*-doctor before; now, it seems, you are a *man*-doctor; how do you get on?'—'Ou, just extraordinar' weel; for your honour maun ken my practice is vera sure and orthodox. I depend entirely upon twa *simples.*'—'And what may their names be? Perhaps it is a secret?'—'I'll tell your honour,' in a low tone; 'my twa simples are just *laudamy* and *calamy!*'—'Simples with a vengeance!' replied Scott. 'But John, do you never happen to *kill* any of your patients?'—'Kill? Ou ay, may be sae! Whiles they die, and whiles no; but it's the will o' Providence. *Ony how, your honour, it wad be lang before it makes up for Flodden!*'"*

It was also in the course of this expedition that Scott first made acquaintance with the late excellent and venerable Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham. The travellers having reached Auckland over night, were seeing the public rooms of the Castle at an early hour next morning, when the Bishop happened, in passing through one of them, to catch a glimpse of Scott's person, and immediately recognising him, from the likeness of the engravings by this time multiplied, introduced himself to the party, and insisted upon acting as cicerone. After showing them the picture-gallery and so forth, his Lordship invited them to join the morning service of the chapel, and when that was over insisted on their remaining to breakfast. But Scott and his lordship were by this time so much pleased with each other that they could not part so easily. The good Bishop ordered his horse, nor did Scott observe without admiration the proud curvetting of the animal on which his lordship proposed to accompany him during the next stage of his progress. "Why, yes, Mr. Scott," said the gentle but high-spirited old man, "I still like to feel my horse under me." He was then in his 79th year, and survived to the age of ninety-two, the model in all things of a real prince of the Church. They parted, after a ride of ten miles, with mutual regret: and on all subsequent rides in that direction, Bishop-Auckland was one of the poet's regular halting places.

At Rokeby, on this occasion, Scott remained about a week: and I transcribe the following brief account of his proceedings while there from Mr. Morritt's *Memorandum*:—

> "I had of course," he says, "had many previous opportunities of testing the almost conscientious fidelity of his local descriptions; but I could not help being singularly struck with the lights which this visit threw on that characteristic of his compositions. The morning after he arrived he said, 'You have often given me materials for romance—now I want a good robber's cave and an old church of the right sort.' We rode out, and he found what he wanted in the ancient slate quarries of Brignal and the ruined Abbey of Egglestone. I observed him noting down even the peculiar little wild flowers and herbs that accidentally grew round and on the side of a bold crag near his intended cave of Guy Denzil; and could not help saying, that as he was not to be upon oath in his work, daisies, violets, and primroses would be as poetical as any of the humble plants he was examining. I laughed, in short, at his scrupulousness; but I understood him when he replied, 'that in

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* Reminiscences of Sir Walter Scott, p. 56.

nature herself no two scenes are exactly alike, and that whoever copied truly what was before his eyes, would possess the same variety in his descriptions, and exhibit apparently an imagination as boundless as the range of nature in the scenes he recorded; whereas—whoever trusted to imagination, would soon find his own mind circumscribed, and contracted to a few favourite images, and the repetition of these would sooner or later produce that very monotony and barrenness which had always haunted descriptive poetry in the hands of any but the patient worshippers of truth. Besides which,' he said, 'local names and peculiarities make a fictitious story look so much better in the face.' In fact, from his boyish habits, he was but half satisfied with the most beautiful scenery when he could not connect with it some local legend, and when I was forced sometimes to confess, with the Knife-grinder, 'Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir'—he would laugh, and say, 'then let us make one—nothing so easy as to make a tradition.'"

Mr. Morritt adds, that he had brought with him about half the Bridal of Triermain—told him that he meant to bring it out the same week with Rokeby—and promised himself particular satisfaction in *laying a trap for Jeffrey;* who, however, as we shall see, escaped the snare.

Some of the following letters will show with what rapidity, after having refreshed and stored his memory with the localities of Rokeby, he proceeded in the composition of the romance.—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq.

"Abbotsford, 12th October, 1812.

"My dear Morritt,

"I have this morning returned from Dalkeith house, to which I was whisked amid the fury of an election tempest, and I found your letter on my table. More on such a subject cannot be said among friends who give each other credit for feeling as they ought.

"We peregrinated over Stanmore, and visited the Castles of Bowes, Brough, Appleby, and Brougham with great interest. Lest our spirit of chivalry thus excited should lack employment, we found ourselves, that is, *I* did, at Carlisle, engaged in the service of two distressed ladies, being no other than our friends Lady Douglas and Lady Louisa Stuart, who overtook us there, and who would have had great trouble in finding quarters, the election being in full vigour, if we had not anticipated their puzzle, and secured a private house capable of holding us all. Some distress occurred, I believe, among the waiting damsels, whose case I had not so carefully considered, for I heard a sentimental exclamation—'Am I to sleep with the greyhounds?' which I conceived to proceed from Lady Douglas's *suivante*, from the exquisite sensibility of tone with which it was uttered, especially as I beheld the fair one descend from the carriage with three half-bound volumes of a novel in her hand. Not having in my power to alleviate her woes, by offering her either a part or the whole of my own couch—'*Transeat*,' quoth I, '*cum cæteris erroribus*.'

"I am delighted with your Cumberland admirer,[*] and give him credit for his visit to the vindicator of Homer; but you missed one of another description, who passed Rokeby with great regret; I mean General John Malcolm, the Persian envoy, the Delhi resident, the poet, the warrior, the polite man, and the Borderer. He is really a fine fellow. I met him at Dalkeith, and we returned together;—he has just left me, after drinking his coffee. A fine time we had of it, talking of Troy town, and Babel, and Persepolis, and Delhi, and Langholm, and Burnfoot;[†] with all manner of episodes about Iskendiar, Rustan, and Johnnie Armstrong. Do you know, that poem of Ferdusi's must be beautiful. He read me some very splendid extracts which he had himself translated. Should you meet him in London, I have given him charge to be acquainted with you, for I am sure you will like each other. To be sure I know him little, but I like his frankness and his sound ideas of morality and policy; and I have observed, that when I have had no great liking to persons at the beginning, it has usually pleased Heaven, as Slender says, to decrease it on further acquaintance. Adieu, I must mount my horse. Our last journey was so delightful that we have every temptation to repeat it. Pray give our kind love to the lady, and believe me ever yours,

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[*] This alluded to a ridiculous hunter of lions, who, being met by Mr. Morritt in the grounds at Rokeby, disclaimed all taste for picturesque beauties, but overwhelmed their owner with Homeric Greek; of which he had told Scott.

[†] *Burnfoot* is the name of a farm-house on the Buccleuch estate, not far from Langholm, where the late Sir John Malcolm and his distinguished brothers were born. Their grandfather had, I believe, found refuge there after forfeiting a good estate and an ancient baronetcy, in the *affair* of 1715. A monument to the gallant General's memory has recently been erected near the spot of his birth.

WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, 29th November, 1812.

"My dear Morritt,

"I have been, and still am, working very hard, in hopes to face the public by Christmas, and I think I have hitherto succeeded in throwing some interest into the piece. It is, however, a darker and more gloomy interest than I intended; but involving one's self with bad company, whether in fiction or in reality, is the way not to get out of it easily; so I have been obliged to bestow more pains and trouble upon Bertram, and one or two blackguards whom he picks up in the slate quarries, than what I originally designed. I am very desirous to have your opinion of the three first Cantos, for which purpose, so soon as I can get them collected, I will send the sheets under cover to Mr. Freeling, whose omnipotent frank will transmit them to Rokeby, where, I presume, you have been long since comfortably settled—

'So York shall overlook the town of York.'

"I trust you will read it with some partiality, because, if I have not been so successful as I could wish in describing your lovely and romantic glens, it has partly arisen from my great anxiety to do it well, which is often attended with the very contrary effect. There are two or three songs, and particularly one in praise of Brignal Banks, which I trust you will like—because, *entre nous*, I like them myself. One of them is a little dashing banditti song, called and entitled Allen-a-Dale. I think you will be able to judge for yourself in about a week. Pray, how shall I send you the *entire goose*, which will be too heavy to travel the same way with its *giblets*—for the Carlisle coach is terribly inaccurate about parcels. I fear I have made one blunder in mentioning the brooks which flow into the Tees. I have made the Balder distinct from that which comes down Thorsgill—I hope I am not mistaken. You will see the passage; and if they are the same rivulet, the leaf must be cancelled.

"I trust this will find Mrs. Morritt pretty well; and I am glad to find she has been better for her little tour. We were delighted with ours, except in respect of its short duration, and Sophia and Walter hold their heads very high among their untravelled companions, from the predominance acquired by their visit to England. You are not perhaps aware of the polish which is supposed to be acquired by the most transitory intercourse with your more refined side of the Tweed. There was an honest carter who once applied to me respecting a plan which he had formed of breeding his son, a great booby of twenty, to the Church. As the best way of evading the scrape, I asked him whether he thought his son's language was quite adapted for the use of a public speaker? to which he answered, with great readiness, that he could knap English with any one, having twice driven his father's cart to Etal coal-hill.

"I have called my heroine Matilda. I don't much like Agnes, though I can't tell why, unless it is because it begins like Agag. Matilda is a name of unmanageable length; but, after all, is better than none, and my poor damsel was likely to go without one in my indecision.

"We are all hungering and thirsting for news from Russia. If Boney's devil does not help him, he is in a poor way. The Leith letters talk of the unanimity of the Russians as being most exemplary; and troops pour in from all quarters of their immense empire. Their commissariat is well managed under the Prince Duke of Oldenburgh. This was their weak point in former wars.

"Adieu! Mrs. Scott and the little people send love to Mrs. Morritt and you. Ever yours, WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, Thursday, 10th December, 1812.

"My dear Morritt,

"I have just time to say that I have received your letters, and am delighted that Rokeby pleases the owner. As I hope the whole will be printed off before Christmas, it will scarce be worth while to send you the other sheets till it reaches you altogether. Your criticisms are the best proof of your kind attention to the poem. I need not say I will pay them every attention in the next edition. But some of the faults are so interwoven with the story, that they must stand. Denzil, for instance, is essential to me, though, as you say, not very interesting; and I assure you that, generally speaking, the *poeta loquitur* has a bad effect in narrative; and when you have twenty things to tell, it is better to be slatternly than tedious. The fact is, that the tediousness of many really good poems arises from an attempt to support the same tone throughout, which often occasions periphrasis, and always stiffness. I am quite sensible that I have often carried the opposite custom too far; but I am apt to impute it partly to not being able to bring out my own ideas well, and partly to haste—not to error in the system. This would, however, lead to a long discussion, more fit for the fireside than for a letter. I need not say that, the poem being in fact your own, you are at perfect liberty to dispose of the sheets as you please. I am glad my geography is pretty correct. It is too late to enquire if Rokeby is insured, for I have burned it down in Canto V.; but I suspect you will bear me no greater grudge than at the noble Russian who burned Moscow. Glorious news to-day from the north—*pereat iste!* Mrs. Scott, Sophia, and Walter join in best compliments to Mrs. Morrit; and I am, in great haste, ever faithfully yours,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—I have heard of Lady Hood by a letter from herself. She is well, and in high spirits, and sends me a pretty topaz seal, with a talisman which secures this letter, and signifies (it seems), which one would scarce have expected from its appearance, my name."

We are now close upon the end of this busy twelve-month; but I must not turn the leaf to 1813, without noticing one of its miscellaneous incidents—his first intercourse by letter with the poet Crabbe. Mr. Hatchard, the publisher of his "Tales," forwarded a copy of the book to Scott as soon as it was ready; and, the bookseller having communicated to his author some flattering expressions in Scott's letter of acknowledgment, Mr. Crabbe addressed him as follows:—

To Walter Scott, Esq. Edinburgh.

"Merston, Grantham, 13th October, 1812.

"Sir,

"Mr. Hatchard, judging rightly of the satisfaction it would afford me, has been so obliging as to communicate your two letters, in one of which you desire my 'Tales' to be sent; in the other, you acknowledge the receipt of them; and in both you mention my verses in such terms, that it would be affected in me were I to deny, and I think unjust if I were to conceal, the pleasure you give me. I am indeed highly gratified.

"I have long entertained a hearty wish to be made known to a poet whose works are so greatly and so universally admired; and I continued to hope that I might at some time find a common friend, by whose intervention I might obtain that honour; but I am confined by duties near my home, and by sickness in it. It may be long before I be in town, and then no such opportunity might offer. Excuse me, then, sir, if I gladly seize this which now occurs to express my thanks for the politeness of your expressions, as well as my desire of being known to a gentleman who has delighted and affected me, and moved all the passions and feelings in turn, I believe —Envy surely excepted—certainly, if I know myself, but in a moderate degree. I truly, rejoice in your success; and while I am entertaining, in my way, a certain set of readers, for the most part, probably, of peculiar turn and habit, I can with pleasure see the effect you produce on all. Mr. Hatchard tells me that he hopes or expects that thousands will read my 'Tales,' and I am convinced that your publisher might, in like manner, so speak of your ten thousands; but this, though it calls to mind the passage, is no true comparison with the related prowess of David and Saul, because I have no evil spirit to arise and trouble me on the occasion; though, if I had, I know no David whose skill is so likely to allay it. Once more, Sir, accept my best thanks, with my hearty wishes for your health and happiness, who am, with great esteem, and true respect,

Dear sir, your obedient servant,

George Crabbe."

I cannot produce Scott's reply to this communication. Mr. Crabbe appears to have, in the course of the year, sent him a copy of all his works, "ex dono auctoris," and there passed between them several letters, one or two of which I must quote.

To Walter Scott, Esq. Edinburgh.

"Know you, sir, a gentleman in Edinburgh, A. Brunton (the Rev.), who dates St. John Street, and who asks my assistance in furnishing hymns which have relation to the Old or New Testament—any thing which might suit the purpose of those who are cooking up a book of Scotch Psalmody? Who is Mr. Brunton? What is his situation? If I could help one who needed help, I would do it cheerfully—but have no great opinion of this undertaking. . . . .

With every good wish, yours sincerely,

Geo. Crabbe."

Scott's answer to this letter expresses the opinions he always held in conversation on the important subject to which it refers; and acting upon which, he himself at various times declined taking any part in the business advocated by Dr. Brunton.

To the Rev. George Crabbe, Merston, Grantham.

"My dear Sir,

"I was favoured with your kind letter some time ago. Of all people in the world, I am least entitled to demand regularity of correspondence; for being, one way and another, doomed to a great deal more writing than suits my indolence, I am sometimes tempted to envy the reverend hermit of Prague, confessor to the niece of Queen Gorboduc, who never saw either pen or ink. Mr. Brunton is a very respectable clergyman of Edinburgh, and I believe the work in which he has solicited your assistance is one adopted by the General Assembly, or Convocation of the Kirk. I have no notion that he has any individual interest in it; he is a well-educated and liberal-minded man, and generally esteemed. I have no particular acquaintance with him myself, though we speak together. He is at this very moment sitting on the outside of the bar of our Supreme Court, within which I am fagging as a clerk; but as he is hearing the opinion of the judges upon an action for augmentation of stipend to him and to his brethren, it would not, I conceive, be a very favourable time to canvass a literary topic. But you are quite safe with him; and having so much command of scriptural language, which appears to me essential to the devotional poetry of Christians, I am sure you can assist his purpose much more than any man alive.

"I think those hymns which do not immediately recall the warm and exalted language of the Bible are apt to be, however elegant, rather cold and flat for the purposes of devotion. You will readily believe that I do not approve of the vague and indiscriminate Scripture language which the fanatics of old and the modern Methodists have adopted, but merely that solemnity and peculiarity of diction, which at once puts the reader and hearer upon his guard as to the purpose of the poetry. To my Gothic ear, indeed, the *Stabat Mater*, the *Dies Iræ*, and some of the other hymns of the Catholic Church, are more solemn and affecting than the fine classical poetry of Buchanan; the one has the gloomy dignity of a Gothic church, and reminds us instantly of the worship to which it is dedicated; the other is more like a Pagan temple, recalling to our memory the classical and fabulous deities.* This is, probably, all referable to the association of ideas—that is, if the 'association of ideas' continues to be the universal pick-lock of all metaphysical difficulties, as it was when I studied moral philosophy—or to any other more fashionable universal solvent which may have succeeded to it in reputation. Adieu, my dear sir, —I hope you and your family will long enjoy all happiness and prosperity. Never be discouraged from the constant use of your charming talent. The opinions of reviewers are really too contradictory to found any thing upon them, whether they are favourable or otherwise; for it is usually their principal object to display the abilities of the writers of the critical lucubrations themselves. Your 'Tales' are universally admired here. I go but little out, but the few judges whose opinions I have been accustomed to look up to, are unanimous. Ever yours, most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.

"My dear Sir,

"Law, then, is your profession—I mean a profession you give your mind and time to—but how 'fag as a *clerk?*' Clerk is a name for a learned person, I know, in our Church; but how the same hand which held the pen of Marmion, holds that with which a clerk fags, unless a clerk means something vastly more than I understand—is not to be comprehended. I wait for elucidation. Know you, dear sir, I have often thought I should love to read *reports*—that is, brief histories of extraordinary cases, with the judgments. If that is what is meant by *reports*, such reading must be pleasant; but, probably, I entertain wrong ideas, and could not understand the books I think so engaging. Yet I conclude there are *histories of cases*, and have often thought of consulting Hatchard whether he knew of such kind of reading, but hitherto I have rested in ignorance. . . . .
. . . . Yours truly,

GEORGE CRABBE."

To the Rev. George Crabbe.

"My dear Sir,

"I have too long delayed to thank you for the most kind and acceptable present of your three volumes. Now am I doubly armed, since I have a set for my cabin at Abbotsford as well as in town; and, to say truth, the auxiliary copy arrived in good time, for my original one suffers as much by its general popularity among my young people, as a popular candidate from the hugs and embraces of his democratical admirers. The clearness and accuracy of your painting, whether natural or moral, renders, I have often remarked, your works generally delightful to those whose youth might render them insensible to the other beauties with which they abound. There are a sort of pictures—surely the most valuable, were it but for that reason—which strike the uninitiated as much as they do the connoisseur, though the last alone can render reason for his admiration. Indeed our old friend Horace knew what he was saying when he chose to address his ode, '*Virginibus puerisque*,' and so did Pope when he told somebody he had the mob on the side of his version of Homer, and did not mind the high-flying critics at Button's. After all, if a faultless poem could be produced, I am satisfied it would tire the critics themselves, and annoy the whole reading world with the spleen.

"You must be delightfully situated in the Vale of Belvoir—a part of England for which I entertain a special kindness, for the sake of the gallant hero, Robin Hood, who, as probably you will readily guess, is no small favourite of mine; his indistinct ideas concerning the doctrine of *meum* and *tuum* being no great objection to an outriding Borderer. I am happy to think that your station is under the protection of the Rutland family of whom fame speaks highly. Our lord of the 'cairn and the scaur,' waste wilderness and hungry hills, for many a league around, is the Duke of Buccleuch, the head of my clan; a kind and benevolent landlord, a warm and zealous friend, and the husband of a lady—*comme il y en a peu*. They are both great admirers of Mr. Crabbe's poetry, and would be happy to know him, should he ever come to Scotland, and venture into the Gothic halls of a Border chief. The early and uniform kindness of this family, with the friendship of the late and present Lord Melville, enabled me, some years ago, to exchange my toils as a barrister, for the lucrative and respectable situation of one of the Clerks of our Supreme Court, which only requires a certain routine of official duty, neither laborious nor calling for any exertion of the mind; so that my time is entirely at my own command, except when I am attending the Court, which seldom occupies more than two hours of the morning during sitting. I besides hold *in commendam* the Sheriffdom of Ettrick Forest, which is now no forest; so that I am a pluralist as to law appointments, and have, as Dogberry says, 'two gowns and every thing handsome about me.'

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* See Life of Dryden, Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. i. p. 293.

"I have often thought it is the most fortunate thing for bards like you and me to have an established profession, and professional character, to render us independent of those worthy gentlemen, the retailers, or, as some have called them, the midwives of literature, who are so much taken up with the abortions they bring into the world, that they are scarcely able to bestow the proper care upon young and flourishing babes like ours. That, however, is only a mercantile way of looking at the matter; but did any of my sons show poetical talent, of which, to my great satisfaction, there are no appearances, the first thing I should do would be to inculcate upon him the duty of cultivating some honourable profession, and qualifying himself to play a more respectable part in society than the mere poet. And as the best corollary of my doctrine, I would make him get your tale of 'The Patron' by heart from beginning to end. It is curious enough that you should have republished the 'Village' for the purpose of sending your young men to college, and I should have written the Lay of the Last Minstrel for the purpose of buying a new horse for the Volunteer Cavalry. I must now send this scrawl into town to get a frank, for, God knows, it is not worthy of postage. With the warmest wishes for your health, prosperity, and increase of fame—though it needs not—I remain most sincerely and affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."[*]

The contrast of the two poets' epistolary styles is highly amusing: but I have introduced these specimens less on that account, than as marking the cordial confidence which a very little intercourse was sufficient to establish between men so different from each other in most of the habits of life. It will always be considered as one of the most pleasing peculiarities in Scott's history that he was the friend of every great contemporary poet: Crabbe, as we shall see more largely in the sequel, was no exception to the rule: yet I could hardly name one of them who, manly principles and the cultivation of literature apart, had many points of resemblance to him: and surely not one who had fewer than Crabbe.

Scott continued, this year, his care for the Edinburgh Annual Register—the historical department of which was again supplied by Mr. Southey. The poetical miscellany owed its opening piece, the Ballad of Polydore, to the readiness with which Scott entered into correspondence with its author, who sent it to him anonymously, with a letter which, like the verses, might well have excited much interest in his mind, even had it not concluded with stating the writer's age to be *fifteen*. Scott invited the youth to visit him in the country, was greatly pleased with the modesty of his manners and the originality of his conversation, and wrote to Joanna Baillie, that, "though not one of the crimps for the muses," he thought he could hardly be mistaken in believing that in the boyish author of Polydore he had discovered a true genius. When I mention the name of my friend William Howison of Clydegrove, it will be allowed that he prognosticated wisely. He continued to correspond with this young gentleman and his father, and gave both much advice, for which both were most grateful. There was inserted in the same volume a set of beautiful stanzas, inscribed to Scott by Mr. Wilson, under the title of the "Magic Mirror," in which that enthusiastic young poet also bears a lofty and lasting testimony to the gentle kindness with which his earlier efforts had been encouraged by him whom he designates, for the first time, by what afterwards became one of his standing titles, that of "The Great Magician."

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[*] Several of these letters having been enclosed in franked covers, which have perished, I am unable to affix the exact dates to them.

"Onwards a figure came, with stately brow,
 And, as he glanced upon the ruin'd pile,
A look of regal pride, 'Say, who art thou
 (His countenance bright'ning with a scornful smile,
He sternly cried), 'whose footsteps rash profane
The wild romantic realm where I have willed to reign?'

"But ere to these proud words I could reply,
 How changed that scornful face to soft and mild!
A witching frenzy glitter'd in his eye,
 Harmless, withal, as that of playful child.
And when once more the gracious vision spoke,
 I felt the voice familiar to mine ear;
While many a faded dream of earth awoke,
 Connected strangely with that unknown seer,
Who now stretch'd forth his arm, and on the sand
A circle round me traced, as with magician's wand," &c. &c.

Scott's own chief contribution to this volume was a brief account of the Life and Poems (hitherto unpublished) of Patrick Carey, whom he pronounces to have been not only as stout a cavalier, but almost as good a poet as his contemporary Lovelace. That Essay was expanded, and prefixed to an edition of Carey's "Trivial Poems and Triolets," which Scott published in 1820; but its circulation in either shape has been limited: and I believe I shall be gratifying the majority of my readers by here transcribing some paragraphs of his beautiful and highly characteristic introduction of this forgotten poet of the 17th century.

"The present age has been so distinguished for research into poetical antiquities, that the discovery of an unknown bard is, in certain chosen literary circles, held as curious as an augmentation of the number of fixed stars would be esteemed by astronomers. It is true, these 'blessed twinklers of the night' are so far removed from us, that they afford no more light than serves barely to evince their existence to the curious investigator; and in like manner the pleasure derived from the revival of an obscure poet is rather in proportion to the rarity of his volume than to its merit; yet this pleasure is not inconsistent with reason and principle. We know by every day's experience the peculiar interest which the lapse of ages confers upon works of human art. The clumsy strength of the ancient castles, which, when raw from the hand of the builder, inferred only the oppressive power of the barons who reared them, is now broken by partial ruin into proper subjects for the poet or the painter; and, as Mason has beautifully described the change,

——'Time
Has moulded into beauty many a tower,
Which, when it frowned with all its battlements,
Was only terrible'——

"The monastery, too, which was at first but a fantastic monument of the superstitious devotion of monarchs, or of the purple pride of fattened abbots, has gained, by the silent influence of antiquity, the power of impressing awe and devotion. Even the stains and weather-taints upon the battlements of such buildings add, like the scars of a veteran, to the affecting impression:

'For time has softened what was harsh when new,
And now the stains are all of sober hue;
The living stains which nature's hand alone,
Profuse of life, pours forth upon the stone.'—*Crabbe.*

"If such is the effect of Time in adding interest to the labours of the architect, if partial destruction is compensated by the additional interest of that which remains, can we deny his exerting a similar influence upon those subjects which are sought after by the bibliographer and poetical antiquary? The obscure poet, who is detected by their keen research, may indeed have possessed but a slender portion of that spirit which has buoyed up the works of distinguished contemporaries during the course of centuries, yet still his verses shall, in the lapse of time, acquire an interest which they did not possess in the eyes of his own generation. The wrath of the critic, like that of the son of Ossian, flies from the foe that is low. Envy, base as she is, has one property of the lion, and cannot prey on carcases; she must drink the blood of a sentient victim, and tear the limbs that are yet warm with vital life. Faction, if the ancient has suffered her persecution, serves only to endear him to the recollection of posterity, whose generous compassion overpays him for the injuries he sustained while in life. And thus freed from the operation of all unfavourable prepossessions, his merit, if he can boast any, has more than fair credit with his readers. This, however, is but part of his advantages. The mere attribute of antiquity is of itself sufficient to interest the fancy, by the lively and powerful train of associations which it awakens. Had the pyramids of Egypt, equally disagreeable in form and senseless as to utility, been the work of any living tyrant, with what feelings, save those of scorn and derision, could we have regarded such a waste of labour? But the sight, nay, the very mention of these wonderful monuments, is associated with the dark and sublime ideas, which vary their tinge according to the favourite hue of our studies. The Christian divine recollects the land of banishment and of refuge; to the eyes of the historian's fancy, they excite the shades of Pharaohs and of Ptolemies, of Cheops and Merops, and Sesostris drawn in triumph by his sceptred slaves; the philosopher beholds the first rays of moral truth as they dawned on the hieroglyphic sculptures of Thebes and Memphis; and the poet sees the fires of magic blazing upon the mystic altars of a land of incantation. Nor is the grandeur of size essential to such feelings, any more than the properties of grace and utility. Even the rudest remnant of a feudal tower, even the obscure and almost undistinguishable vestige of an altogether unknown edifice, has power to awaken such trains of fancy. We have a fellow interest with the 'son of the winged days,' over whose fallen habitation we tread:

'The massy stones, though hewn most roughly, show
The hand of man had once at least been there.'—*Wordsworth.*

"Similar combinations give a great part of the delight we receive from ancient poetry. In the rude song of the Scald, we regard less the strained imagery and extravagance of epithet, than the wild impression it conveys of the dauntless resolution, savage superstition, rude festivity, and ceaseless depredation of the ancient Scandinavians. In the metrical romance, we pardon the long, tedious, and bald enumeration of trifling particulars; the reiterated sameness of the eternal combats between knights and giants; the overpowering languor of the love speeches, and the merciless length and similarity of description—when Fancy whispers to us, that such strains may have cheered the sleepless pillow of the Black Prince on the memorable eves of Cressy or Poictiers. There is a certain romance of Ferumbras, which Robert the Bruce read to his few followers to divert their thoughts from the desperate circumstances in which they were placed, after an unsuccessful attempt to rise against the English. Is there a true Scotsman who, being aware of this anecdote, would be disposed to yawn over the romance of Ferumbras? Or, on the contrary, would not the image of the dauntless hero, inflexible in defeat, beguiling the anxiety of his war-worn attendants by the lays of the minstrel, give to these rude lays themselves an interest beyond Greek and Roman fame?"

The year 1812 had the usual share of minor literary labours—such as contributions to the journals; and before it closed, the Romance of Rokeby was finished. Though it had been long in hand, the MS. sent to the printer bears abundant evidence of its being the *prima cura:* three cantos at least reached Ballantyne through the Melrose post—written on paper of various sorts and sizes—full of blots and interlineations—the closing couplets of a despatch now and then encircling the page, and mutilated by the breaking of the seal.

According to the recollection of Mr. Cadell, though James Ballantyne read the poem, as the sheets were advancing through the press, to his usual circle of literary *dilettanti*, their whispers were far from exciting in Edinburgh such an intensity of expectation as had been witnessed in the case of The Lady of the Lake. He adds, however, that it was looked for with undiminished anxiety in the south. "Send me *Rokeby*," Byron writes to Murray, on seeing it advertised,—"Who the devil is he? No matter—he has good connexions, and will be well introduced."* Such, I suppose, was the general feeling in London. I well remember, being in those days a young student at Oxford, how the booksellers' shops there were beleagured for the earliest copies, and how he that had been so fortunate as to secure one was followed to his chambers by a tribe of friends, all as eager to hear it read as ever horse-jockeys were to see the conclusion of a match at Newmarket; and indeed not a few of those enthusiastic academics had bets depending on the issue of the struggle, which they considered the elder favourite as making, to keep his own ground against the fiery rivalry of Childe Harold.

The poem was published a day or two before Scott returned to Edinburgh from Abbotsford, between which place and Mertoun he had divided his Christmas vacation. On the 9th and 10th of January, 1813, he thus addresses his friends at Sunninghill and Hampstead:—

To George Ellis, Esq.

"My dear Ellis,

"I am sure you will place it to any thing rather than want of kindness, that I have been so long silent—so very long, indeed, that I am not quite sure whether the fault is on my side or yours—but, be it what it may, it can never, I am sure, be laid to forgetfulness in either. This comes to train you on to the merciful reception of a Tale of the Civil Wars; not political, however, but merely a pseudo-romance of pseudo-chivalry. I have converted a lusty buccanier into a hero with some effect; but the worst of all my undertakings is, that my rogue always, in despite of me, turns out my hero. I know not how this should be—I am myself, as Hamlet says, 'indifferent honest;' and my father, though an attorney (as you will call him), was one of the most honest men, as well as gentlemanlike, that ever breathed. I am sure I can bear witness to that—for if he had at all *smacked*, or *grown to*, like the son of Lancelot Gobbo, he might have left us all as rich as Crœsus, besides having the pleasure of taking a fine primrose path himself, instead of squeezing himself through a tight gate and up a steep ascent, and leaving us the decent competence of an honest man's children. As to our more ancient pedigree, I should be loath to vouch for them. My grandfather was a horse-jockey and cattle-dealer, and made a fortune; my great-grandfather, a Jacobite and traitor (as the times called him), and lost one; and after him intervened one or two half-starved lairds, who rode a lean horse, and were followed by leaner greyhounds; gathered with difficulty a hundred pounds from a hundred tenants; fought duels; cocked their hats,—and called themselves gentlemen. Then we come to the old Border times, cattle-driving, halters, and so forth, for which, in the matter of honesty, very little I suppose can be said—at least in modern acceptation of the word. Upon the whole, I am inclined to think it is owing to the earlier part of this inauspicious generation that I uniformly find myself in the same scrape in my fables, and that, in spite of the most obstinate determination to the contrary, the greatest rogue in my canvas always stands out as the most conspicuous and prominent figure. All this will be a riddle to you, unless you have received a certain packet, which the Ballantynes were to have sent under Freeling's or Croker's cover, so soon as they could get a copy done up.

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* Byron's Life and Works, vol. ii. p. 169.

"And now let me gratulate you upon the renovated vigour of your fine old friends the Russians. By the Lord, sir! it is most famous this campaign of theirs. I was not one of the very sanguine persons who anticipated the actual capture of Buonaparte—a hope which rather proceeded from the ignorance of those who cannot conceive that military movements, upon a large scale, admit of such a force being accumulated upon any particular point as may, by abandonment of other considerations, always ensure the escape of an individual. But I had no hope, in my time, of seeing the dry bones of the Continent so warm with life again, as this revivification of the Russians proves them to be. I look anxiously for the effect of these great events on Prussia, and even upon Saxony; for I think Boney will hardly trust himself again in Germany, now that he has been plainly shown, both in Spain and Russia, that protracted stubborn unaccommodating resistance will foil those grand exertions in the long run. All laud be to Lord Wellington, who first taught that great lesson.

"Charlotte is with me just now at this little scrub habitation, where we weary ourselves all day in looking at our projected improvements, and then slumber over the fire, I pretending to read, and she to work trout-nets, or cabbage-nets, or some such article. What is Canning about? Is there any chance of our getting him in? Surely Ministers cannot hope to do without him. Believe me, dear Ellis, ever truly yours, W. SCOTT.

"Abbotsford, 9th January, 1813."

To Miss Joanna Baillie.

"Abbotsford, January 10, 1813.

"Your kind encouragement, my dear friend, has given me spirits to complete the lumbering quarto, which I hope has reached you by this time. I have gone on with my story *forth right*, without troubling myself excessively about the developement of the plot and other critical matters—

'But shall we go mourn for that, my dear?
The pale moon shines by night;
And when we wander here and there,
We then do go most right.'

I hope you will like Bertram to the end; he is a Caravaggio sketch, which, I may acknowledge to you—but tell it not in Gath—I rather pique myself upon; and he is within the keeping of Nature, though critics will say to the contrary. It may be difficult to fancy that any one should take a sort of pleasure in bringing out such a character, but I suppose it is partly owing to bad reading, and ill-directed reading, when I was young. No sooner had I corrected the last sheet of Rokeby, than I escaped to this Patmos as blithe as bird on tree, and have been ever since most decidedly idle—that is to say, with busy idleness. I have been banking, and securing, and dyking against the river, and planting willows, and aspens, and weeping-birches, around my new old well, which I think I told you I had constructed last summer. I have now laid the foundations of a famous back-ground of copse, with pendent trees in front; and I have only to beg a few years to see how my colours will come out of the canvas. Alas! who can promise that? But somebody will take my place—and enjoy them, whether I do or no. My old friend and pastor, Principal Robertson (the historian), when he was not expected to survive many weeks, still watched the setting of the blossom upon some fruit-trees in the garden, with as much interest as if it was possible he could have seen the fruit come to maturity, and moralized on his own conduct, by observing that we act upon the same inconsistent motive throughout life. It is well we do so for those that are to come after us. I could almost dislike the man who refuses to plant walnut-trees, because they do not bear fruit till the second generation; and so—many thanks to our ancestors, and much joy to our successors, and truce to my fine and very new strain of morality. Yours ever, W. S."

The following letter lets us completely behind the scenes at the publication of Rokeby. The "horrid story" it alludes to was that of a young woman found murdered on New Year's Day in the highway between Greta Bridge and Barnard Castle—a crime, the perpetrator of which was never discovered. The account of a parallel atrocity in Galloway, and the mode of its detection, will show the reader from what source Scott drew one of the most striking incidents in his Guy Mannering:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park.

"Edinburgh, 12th January, 1813.

"Dear Morritt,

"Yours I have just received in mine office at the Register-House, which will excuse this queer sheet of paper. The publication of Rokeby was delayed till Monday, to give the London publishers a fair start. My copies, that is, my friends', were all to be got off about Friday or Saturday; but yours may have been a little later, as it was to be what they call a picked one. I will call at Ballantyne's as I return from this place, and close the letter with such news as I can get about it there. The book has gone off here very bobbishly; for the impression of 3000 and upwards is within two or three score of being exhausted, and the demand for these continuing faster than they can be boarded. I am heartily glad of this, for now I have nothing to fear but a bankruptcy in the Gazette of Parnassus; but the loss of five or six thousand pounds to my good friends and school-companions would have afflicted me very much. I wish we could whistle you here to-day. Ballantyne always gives a christening dinner, at which the Duke of Buccleuch, and a great many of my friends, are formally feasted. He has always the best singing that can be heard in Edinburgh, and we have usually a very pleasant party, at which your health as patron and proprietor of Rokeby will be faithfully and honourably remembered.

"Your horrid story reminds me of one in Galloway, where the perpetrator of a similar enormity on a poor idiot girl, was discovered by means of the print of his foot which he left upon the clay floor of the cottage in the death-struggle. It pleased Heaven (for nothing short of a miracle could have done it) to enlighten the understanding of an old ram-headed sheriff, who was usually nick-named Leather-head. The steps which he took to discover the murderer were most sagacious. As the poor girl was pregnant (for it was not a case of violation), it was pretty clear that her paramour had done the deed, and equally so that he must be a native of the district. The sheriff caused the minister to advertise from the pulpit that the girl would be buried on a particular day, and that all persons in the neighbourhood were invited to attend the funeral, to show their detestation of such an enormous crime, as well as to evince their own innocence. This was sure to bring the murderer to the funeral. When the people were assembled in the kirk, the doors were locked by the sheriff's order, and the shoes of all the men were examined; that of the murderer was detected by the measure of the foot, tread, &c., and a peculiarity in the mode in which the sole of one of them had been patched. The remainder of the curious chain of evidence upon which he was convicted will suit best with twilight, or a blinking candle, being too long for a letter. The fellow bore a most excellent character, and had committed this crime for no other reason that could be alleged, than that, having been led accidentally into an intrigue with this poor wretch, his pride revolted at the ridicule which was likely to attend the discovery.

"On calling at Ballantyne's, I find, as I had anticipated, that your copy, being of royal size, requires some particular nicety in hot-pressing. It will be sent by the Carlisle mail *quam primum*. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

"P. S.—Love to Mrs. Morritt. John Ballantyne says he has just about eighty copies left, out of 3250, this being the second day of publication, and the book a two guinea one."

It will surprise no one to hear that Mr. Morritt assured his friend he considered Rokeby as the best of all his poems. The admirable, perhaps the unique fidelity of the local descriptions, might alone have swayed, for I will not say it perverted, the judgment of the lord of that beautiful and thenceforth classical domain; and, indeed, I must admit that I never understood or appreciated half the charm of this poem until I had become familiar with its scenery. But Scott himself had not designed to rest his strength on these descriptions. He said to James Ballantyne while the work was in progress (September 2), "I hope the thing will do, chiefly because the world will not expect from *me* a poem of which the interest turns upon *character;*" and in another letter (October 28, 1812), "I think you will see the same sort of difference taken in all my former poems,—of which I would say, if it is fair for me to say any thing, that the force in the Lay is thrown on style—in Marmion, on description—and in the Lady of the Lake, on incident."* I suspect some of these distinctions may have been matters of after-thought; but as to Rokeby there can be no mistake. His own original conceptions of some of its principal characters have been explained in letters already cited; and I believe no one who compares the poem with his novels will doubt that, had he undertaken their portraiture in prose, they would have come forth with effect hardly inferior to any of all the groups he ever created. As it is, I question whether even in his prose there is any thing more exquisitely wrought out, as well as fancied, than the whole contrast of the two rivals for the love of the heroine in Rokeby; and that heroine herself, too, has a very particular interest attached to her. Writing to Miss Edgeworth five years after this time (10th March, 1818), he says,—

"I have not read one of my poems since they were printed, excepting last year the Lady of the Lake, which I liked better than I expected, but not well enough to induce me to go through the rest, so I may truly say with Macbeth—

'I am afraid to think of what I've done—
Look on't again I dare not.'

"This much of *Matilda* I recollect—(for that is not so easily forgotten)—that she was attempted for the existing person of a lady who is now no more, so that I am particularly flattered with your distinguishing it from the others, which are in general mere shadows."

I can have no doubt that the lady he here alludes to, was the object of his own unfortunate first love; and as little, that in the romantic generosity, both of the youthful poet who fails to win her higher favour, and of his chivalrous competitor, we have before us something more than "a mere shadow."

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* Several letters to Ballantyne on the same subject are quoted in the notes to the last edition of Rokeby. See Scott's Poetical Works, 1834, vol. ix., pp. 1–3; and especially the note on p. 300, from which it appears that the closing stanza was added, in deference to Ballantyne and Erskine, though the author retained his own opinion that "it spoiled one effect without producing another."

In spite of these graceful characters, the inimitable scenery on which they are presented, and the splendid vivacity and thrilling interest of several chapters in the story—such as the opening interview of Bertram and Wycliff—the flight up the cliff on the Greta—the first entrance of the cave at Brignall—the firing of Rokeby Castle—and the catastrophe in Eglistone Abbey; — in spite certainly of exquisitely happy lines profusely scattered throughout the whole composition, and of some detached images—that of the setting of the tropical sun,* for example—which were never surpassed by any poet; in spite of all these merits, the immediate success of Rokeby was greatly inferior to that of the Lady of the Lake; nor has it ever since been so much a favourite with the public at large as any other of his poetical romances. He ascribes this failure, in his introduction of 1830, partly to the radically unpoetical character of the Roundheads; but surely their character has its poetical side also, had his prejudices allowed him to enter upon its study with impartial sympathy; and I doubt not, Mr. Morritt suggested the difficulty on this score, when the outline of the story was as yet undetermined, from consideration rather of the poet's peculiar feelings, and powers as hitherto exhibited, than of the subject absolutely. Partly he blames the satiety of the public ear, which had had so much of his rhythm, not only from himself, but from dozens of mocking-birds, male and female, all more or less applauded in their day, and now all equally forgotten.† This circumstance, too, had probably no slender effect; the more that, in defiance of all the hints of his friends, he now, in his narrative, repeated (with more negligence) the uniform octosyllabic couplets of the Lady of the Lake, instead of recurring to the more varied cadence of the Lay or Marmion. It is fair to add that, among the London circles at least, some sarcastic flings in Mr. Moore's "Twopenny Post Bag" must have had an unfavourable influence on this occasion.‡ But the cause of failure which the Poet him-

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* "My noontide, India may declare;
Like her fierce sun, I fired the air!
Like him, to wood and cave bade fly
Her natives, from mine angry eye.
And now, my race of terror run,
Mine be the eve of tropic sun!
No pale gradations quench his ray,
No twilight dews his wrath allay;
With disk like battle-target red,
He rushes to his burning bed,
Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once—and all is night."—*Canto* vi. 21.

† "Scott found peculiar favour and imitation among the fair sex. There was Miss Halford, and Miss Mitford, and Miss Francis; but, with the greatest respect be it spoken, none of his imitators did much honour to the original except Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, until the appearance of 'The Bridal of Triermain' and 'Harold the Dauntless,' which, in the opinion of some, equalled if not surpassed him; and, lo! after three or four years, they turned out to be the master's own compositions."—BYRON, vol. xv., p. 96.

‡ See, for instance, the Epistle of Lady Corke—or that of Messrs Lackington, booksellers, to one of their dandy authors—

"Should you feel any touch of poetical glow,
We've a scheme to suggest—Mr. Scott, you must know,

self places last, was unquestionably the main one. The deeper and darker passion of Childe Harold, the audacity of its morbid voluptuousness, and the melancholy majesty of the numbers in which it defied the world, had taken the general imagination by storm; and Rokeby, with many beauties and some sublimities, was pitched, as a whole, on a key which seemed tame in the comparison.

I have already adverted to the fact that Scott felt it a relief, not a fatigue, to compose the Bridal of Triermain *pari passu* with Rokeby. In answer, for example, to one of James Ballantyne's letters, urging accelerated speed with the weightier romance, he says, "I fully share in your anxiety to get forward the grand work; but, I assure you, I feel the more confidence from coquetting with the guerilla."

The quarto of Rokeby was followed, within two months, by the small volume which had been designed for a twin-birth;—the MS. had been transcribed by one of the Ballantynes themselves, in order to guard against any indiscretion of the press-people; and the mystification, aided and abetted by Erskine, in no small degree heightened the interest of its reception. Except Mr. Morritt, Scott had, so far as I am aware, no English confidant upon this occasion. Whether any of his daily companions in the Parliament House were in the secret, I have never heard; but I can scarcely believe that any of those intimate friends, who had known him and Erskine from their youth upwards, could have for a moment believed the latter capable either of the invention or the execution of this airy and fascinating romance in little. Mr. Jeffrey, for whom chiefly "the trap had been set," was far too sagacious to be caught in it; but, as it happened, he made a voyage that year to America, and thus lost the opportunity of immediately expressing his opinion either of Rokeby or of the Bridal of Triermain. The writer in the Quarterly Review seems to have been completely deceived—

> "We have already spoken of it," says the critic, "as an imitation of Mr. Scott's style of composition; and if we are compelled to make the general approbation more precise and specific, we should say, that if it be inferior in vigour to some of his productions, it equals or surpasses them in elegance and beauty; that it is more uniformly tender, and far less infected with the unnatural prodigies and coarseness of the earlier romances. In estimating its merits, however, we should forget that it is offered as an imitation. The diction undoubtedly reminds us of a rhythm and cadence we have heard before; but the sentiments, descriptions, and characters, have qualities that are native and unborrowed."—*Quarterly Review, July*, 1813.

If this writer was, as I suppose, Ellis, he probably considered it as a thing impossible that Scott should have engaged in such a scheme without giving him a hint of it; but to have admitted into the secret

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(Who, we're sorry to say it, now works for the *Row*),
Having quitted the Borders to seek new renown,
Is coming by long Quarto stages to town,
And beginning with Rokeby (the job's sure to pay),
Means to do all the gentlemen's seats on the way.
Now the scheme is, though none of our hackneys can beat him,
To start a new Poet through Highgate to meet him;
Who by means of quick proofs—no revises—long coaches—
May do a few Villas before Scott approaches;
Indeed if our Pegasus be not curst shabby,
He'll reach, without foundering, at least Woburn-Abbey," &c. &c.

any one who was likely to criticise the piece, would have been to sacrifice the very object of the device. Erskine's own suggestion, that "perhaps a quizzical review might be got up," led, I believe, to nothing more important than a paragraph in one of the Edinburgh newspapers. He may be pardoned for having been not a little flattered to find it generally considered as not impossible that he should have written such a poem; and I have heard Ballantyne say, that nothing could be more amusing than the style of his coquetting on the subject while it was yet fresh; but when this first excitement was over, his natural feeling of what was due to himself, as well as to his friend, dictated many a remonstrance; and, though he ultimately acquiesced in permitting another minor romance to be put forth in the same manner, he did so reluctantly, and was far from acting his part so well.

Scott says, in the Introduction to the Lord of the Isles,—

> "As Mr. Erskine was more than suspected of a taste for poetry, and as I took care, in several places, to mix something that might resemble (as far as was in my power) my friend's feeling and manner, the train easily caught, and two large editions were sold."

Among the passages to which he here alludes, are no doubt those in which the character of the minstrel Arthur is shaded with the colourings of an almost effeminate gentleness. Yet, in the midst of them, the "mighty minstrel" himself, from time to time, escapes; as, for instance, where the lover bids Lucy, in that exquisite picture of crossing a mountain stream, trust to his "stalwart arm"—

"Which could yon oak's prone trunk uprear."

Nor can I pass the compliment to Scott's own fair patroness, where Lucy's admirer is made to confess, with some momentary lapse of gallantry, that he

"Ne'er won—best meed to minstrel true—
One favouring smile from fair Buccleuch;"

nor the burst of genuine Borderism,—

"Bewcastle now must keep the hold,
Speir-Adam's steeds must bide in stall;
Of Hartley-burn the bowmen bold
Must only shoot from battled wall;
And Liddesdale may buckle spur,
And Teviot now may belt the brand,
Taras and Ewes keep nightly stir,
And Eskdale foray Cumberland."—

But, above all, the choice of the scenery, both of the Introductions and of the story itself, reveals the early and treasured predilections of the poet. For who that remembers the circumstances of his first visit to the vale of St. John, but must see throughout the impress of his own real romance? I own I am not without a suspicion that, in one passage, which always seemed to me a blot upon the composition—that in which Arthur derides the military coxcombries of his rival—

"Who comes in foreign trashery
Of tinkling chain and spur—
A walking haberdashery
Of feathers, lace, and fur;—

In Rowley's antiquated phrase,
Horse-milliner of modern days;"

there is a sly reference to the incidents of a certain ball, of August, 1797, at the Gilsland Spa.*

Among the more prominent Erskinisms, are the eulogistic mention of Glasgow, the scene of Erskine's education; and the lines on Collins, —a supplement to whose Ode on the Highland Superstitions is, as far as I know, the only specimen that ever was published of Erskine's verse.†

As a whole, the Bridal of Triermain appears to me as characteristic of Scott as any of his larger poems. His genius pervades and animates it beneath a thin and playful veil, which perhaps adds as much of grace as it takes away of splendour. As Wordsworth says of the eclipse on the lake of Lugano—

"'Tis sunlight sheathed and gently charmed;"

and I think there is at once a lightness and a polish of versification beyond what he has elsewhere attained. If it be a miniature, it is such a one as a Cooper might have hung fearlessly beside the masterpieces of Vandyke.

The Introductions contain some of the most exquisite passages he ever produced; but their general effect has always struck me as unfortunate. No art can reconcile us to contemptuous satire of the merest frivolities of modern life—some of them already, in twenty years, grown obsolete—interlaid between such bright visions of the old world of romance, when

"Strength was gigantic, valour high,
And wisdom soared beyond the sky,
And beauty had such matchless beam
As lights not now a lover's dream."

The fall is grievous, from the hoary minstrel of Newark, and his feverish tears on Killiecrankie, to a pathetic swain, who can stoop to denounce as objects of his jealousy—

"The landaulet and four blood bays—
The Hessian boot and pantaloon."

Before Triermain came out, Scott had taken wing for Abbotsford; and indeed he seems to have so contrived it in his earlier period, that he should not be in Edinburgh when any unavowed work of his was published; whereas, from the first, in the case of books that bore his name on the title-page, he walked as usual to the Parliament House, and bore all the buzz and tattle of friends and acquaintance with an air of good-humoured equanimity, or rather total apparent indifference. The following letter, which contains some curious matter of more kinds than one, was written partly in town and partly in the country:—

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* See *ante*, p. 154.

† It is included in the Border Minstrelsy. Scott's Poetical Works, vol. i., p. 270.

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Edinburgh, March 13th, 1813.

"My dearest Friend,

"The pinasters have arrived safe, and I can hardly regret, while I am so much flattered by, the trouble you have had in collecting them. I have got some wild larch trees from Loch Katrine, and both are to be planted next week, when, God willing, I shall be at Abbotsford to superintend the operation. I have got a little corner of ground laid out for a nursery, where I shall rear them carefully till they are old enough to be set forth to push their fortune on the banks of Tweed.—What I shall finally make of this villa-work I don't know, but in the mean time it is very entertaining. I shall have to resist very flattering invitations this season; for I have received hints, from more quarters than one, that my bow would be acceptable at Carlton House in case I should be in London, which is very flattering, especially as there were some prejudices to be got over in that quarter. I should be in some danger of giving new offence, too; for, although I utterly disapprove of the present rash and ill-advised course of the princess, yet, as she always was most kind and civil to me, I certainly could not, as a gentleman, decline obeying any commands she might give me to wait upon her, especially in her present adversity. So, though I do not affect to say I should be sorry to take an opportunity of peeping at the splendours of royalty, prudence and economy will keep me quietly at home till another day. My great amusement here this some time past has been going almost nightly to see John Kemble, who certainly is a great artist. It is a pity he shows too much of his machinery. I wish he could be double caped, as they say of watches; but the fault of too much study certainly does not belong to many of his tribe. He is, I think, very great in those parts especially where character is tinged by some acquired and systematic habits, like those of the Stoic philosophy in Cato and Brutus, or of misanthropy in Penruddock: but sudden turns and natural bursts of passion are not his forte. I saw him play Sir Giles Overreach (the Richard III. of middling life) last night; but he came not within a hundred miles of Cooke, whose terrible visage, and short, abrupt, and savage utterance, gave a reality almost to that extraordinary scene in which he boasts of his own successful villany to a nobleman of worth and honour, of whose alliance he is ambitious. Cooke contrived somehow to impress upon the audience the idea of such a monster of enormity as had learned to pique himself even upon his own atrocious character. But Kemble was too handsome, too plausible, and too smooth, to admit its being probable that he should be blind to the unfavourable impression which these extraordinary vaunts are likely to make on the person whom he is anxious to conciliate.

"Abbotsford, 21st March.

"This letter, begun in Edinburgh, is to take wing from Abbotsford. John Winnos (now John Winnos is the sub-oracle of Abbotsford, the principal being Tom Purdie)—John Winnos pronounces that the pinaster seed ought to be raised at first on a hot-bed, and thence transplanted to a nursery: so to a hot-bed they have been carefully consigned, the upper oracle not objecting, in respect his talent lies in catching a salmon, or finding a hare sitting—on which occasions (being a very complete Scrub) he solemnly exchanges his working jacket for an old green one of mine, and takes the air of one of Robin Hood's followers. His more serious employments are ploughing, harrowing, and overseeing all my premises; being a complete jack-of-all-trades, from the carpenter to the shepherd, nothing comes strange to him; and being extremely honest, and somewhat of a humourist, he is quite my right hand. I cannot help singing his praises at this moment, because I have so many odd and out-of-the-way things to do, that I believe the conscience of many of our jog-trot countrymen would revolt at being made my instrument in sacrificing good corn-land to the visions of Mr. Price's theory. Mr. Pinkerton, the historian, has a play coming out at Edinburgh; it is by no means bad poetry, yet I think it will not be popular; the people come and go, and speak very notable things in good blank verse, but there is no very strong interest excited: the plot also is disagreeable, and liable to the objections (though in a less degree) which have been urged against the Mysterious Mother: it is to be acted on Wednesday; I will let you know its fate. P., with whom I am in good habits, showed me the

MS., but I referred him, with such praise as I could conscientiously bestow, to the players and the public. I don't know why one should take the task of damning a man's play out of the hands of the proper tribunal. Adieu, my dear friend. I have scarce room for love to Miss, Mrs, and Dr. B.

W. SCOTT."

To this I add a letter to Lady Louisa Stuart, who had sent him a copy of these lines, found by Lady Douglas on the back of a tattered bank-note—

"Farewell, my note, and wheresoe'er ye wend,
Shun gaudy scenes, and be the poor man's friend.
You've left a poor one, go to one as poor,
And drive despair and hunger from his door."

It appears that these noble friends had adopted, or feigned to adopt, the belief that the Bridal of Triermain was a production of Mr. R. P. Gillies—who had about this time published an imitation of Lord Byron's *Romaunt*, under the title of "Childe Alarique."

To the Lady Louisa Stuart, &c. &c. &c. Bothwell Castle.

"Abbotsford, 28th April 1812.

"Dear Lady Louisa,

"Nothing can give me more pleasure than to hear from you, because it is both a most acceptable favour to me, and also a sign that your own spirits are recovering their tone. Ladies are, I think, very fortunate in having a resource in work at a time when the mind rejects intellectual amusement. Men have no resource but striding up and down the room, like a bird that beats itself to pieces against the bars of its cage; whereas needle-work is a sort of sedative, too mechanical to worry the mind by distracting it from the points on which its musings turn, yet gradually assisting it in regaining steadiness and composure; for so curiously are our bodies and minds linked together, that the regular and constant employment of the former on any process, however dull and uniform, has the effect of tranquillizing, where it cannot disarm, the feelings of the other. I am very much pleased with the lines on the guinea note, and if Lady Douglas does not object I would willingly mention the circumstance in the Edinburgh Annual Register. I think it will give the author great delight to know that his lines had attracted attention, and *had* sent the paper on which they were recorded, 'heaven-directed, to the poor.' Of course I would mention no names. There was, as your Ladyship may remember, some years since, a most audacious and determined murder committed on a porter belonging to the British Linen Company's Bank at Leith, who was stabbed to the heart in broad daylight, and robbed of a large sum in notes.[*] If ever this crime comes to light, it will be through the circumstance of an idle young fellow having written part of a playhouse song on one of the notes, which, however, has as yet never appeared in circulation.

"I am very glad you like Rokeby, which is nearly out of fashion and memory with me. It has been wonderfully popular, about ten thousand copies having walked off already, in about three months, and the demand continuing faster than it can be supplied. As to my imitator, the Knight of Triermain, I will endeavour to convey to Mr. Gillies (*puisque Gillies il est*) your Ladyship's very just strictures on the Introduction to the first Canto. But if he takes the opinion of a hacked old author like myself, he will content himself with avoiding such bevues in future, without attempting to mend those which are already made. There is an honest old proverb which says, *confess and be hanged;* and truly if an author acknowledges his own blunders, I do not know who he can expect to stand by him; whereas, let him confess nothing, and he will always find some injudicious admirers to vindicate even his faults. So that I think after publication the effect of criticism should be prospective, in which point of view I dare say Mr. G. will take your friendly hint, especially as it is confirmed by that of the best judges who have read the poem. Here is beautiful weather for April! an absolute snow-storm mortifying me to the core by retarding the growth of all my young trees and shrubs. Charlotte begs to be most respectfully remembered to your Ladyship and Lady D. We are realizing the nursery tale of the man and his wife who lived in a vinegar bottle, for our only sitting room is just twelve feet square, and my Eve alleges that I am too big for our paradise. To make amends, I have created a tolerable garden, occupying about an English acre, which I begin to be very fond of. When one passes forty, an addition to the quiet occupations of life becomes of real value, for I do not hunt and fish with quite the relish I did ten years ago. Adieu, my dear Lady Louisa, and all good attend you.

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[*] This murder, perpetrated in Novem [illegible] mains a mystery in 1836.

Walter Scott."

CHAPTER XXVI.

AFFAIRS OF JOHN BALLANTYNE & CO.—CAUSES OF THEIR DERANGEMENT—LETTERS OF SCOTT TO HIS PARTNERS—NEGOTIATION FOR RELIEF WITH MESSRS. CONSTABLE—NEW PURCHASE OF LAND AT ABBOTSFORD—EMBARRASSMENTS CONTINUED—JOHN BALLANTYNE'S EXPRESSES—DRUMLANRIG—PENRITH, ETC.—SCOTT'S MEETING WITH THE MARQUIS OF ABERCORN AT LONGTOWN—HIS APPLICATION TO THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—OFFER OF THE POET-LAUREATESHIP—CONSIDERED—AND DECLINED—ADDRESS OF THE CITY OF EDINBURGH TO THE PRINCE REGENT—ITS RECEPTION—CIVIC HONOURS CONFERRED ON SCOTT—QUESTION OF TAXATION ON LITERARY INCOME—LETTERS TO MR. MORRITT—MR. SOUTHEY—MR. RICHARDSON—MR. CRABBE—MISS BAILLIE AND LORD BYRON.—1813.

About a month after the publication of the Bridal of Triermain, the affairs of the Messrs. Ballantyne, which had never apparently been in good order since the establishment of the bookselling firm, became so embarrassed as to call for Scott's most anxious efforts to disentangle them. Indeed, it is clear that there had existed some very serious perplexity in the course of the preceding autumn; for Scott writes to John Ballantyne, while Rokeby was in progress (August 11, 1812)—

> "I have a letter from James, very anxious about your health and state of spirits. If you suffer the present inconveniences to depress you too much, you are wrong; and if you conceal any part of them, are very unjust to us all. I am always ready to make any sacrifices to do justice to engagements, and would rather sell any thing, or every thing, than be less than true men to the world."

I have already, perhaps, said enough to account for the general want of success in this publishing adventure; but Mr. James Ballantyne sums up the case so briefly in his death-bed paper, that I may here quote his words.

> "My brother," he says, "though an active and pushing, was not a cautious bookseller, and the large sums received never formed an addition to stock. In fact, they were all expended by the partners, who, being then young and sanguine men, not unwillingly adopted my brother's hasty results. By May, 1813, in a word, the absolute throwing away of our own most valuable publications, and the rash adoption of some injudicious speculations of Mr. Scott, had introduced such losses and embarrassments, that, after a very careful consideration, Mr. Scott determined to dissolve the concern."

He adds,—

> "This became a matter of less difficulty, because time had in a great measure

worn away the differences between Mr. Scott and Mr. Constable, and Mr. Hunter was now out of Constable's concern.* A peace, therefore, was speedily made up, and the old habits of intercourse were restored."

How reluctantly Scott had made up his mind to open such a negotiation with Constable, as involved a complete exposure of the mismanagement of John Ballantyne's business as a publisher, will appear from a letter dated about the Christmas of 1812, in which he says to James, who had proposed asking Constable to take a share both in Rokeby and in the Annual Register,—

> "You must be aware, that in stating the objections which occur to me to taking in Constable, I think they ought to give way either to absolute necessity or to very strong grounds of advantage. But I *am* persuaded nothing ultimately good can be expected from any connexion with that house, unless for those who have a mind to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. We will talk the matter coolly over, and in the mean while, perhaps you could see W. Erskine, and learn what impression this odd union is likely to make among your friends. Erskine is sound-headed, and quite to be trusted with *your whole story*. I must own I can hardly think the purchase of the Register is equal to the loss of credit and character which your surrender will be conceived to infer."

At the time when he wrote this, Scott no doubt anticipated that Rokeby would have success not less decisive than The Lady of the Lake; but in this expectation—though 10,000 copies in three months would have seemed to any other author a triumphant sale—he had been disappointed. And mean while the difficulties of the firm, accumulating from week to week, had reached, by the middle of May, a point which rendered it absolutely necessary for him to conquer all his scruples.

Mr. Cadell, then Constable's partner, says in his *Memoranda*,—

> "Prior to this time the reputation of John Ballantyne and Co. had been decidedly on the decline. It was notorious in the trade that their general speculations had been unsuccessful; they were known to be grievously in want of money. These rumours were realized to the full by an application which Messrs B. made to Mr. Constable in May, 1813, for pecuniary aid, accompanied by an offer of some of the books they had published since 1809, as a purchase, along with various shares in Mr. Scott's own poems. Their difficulties were admitted, and the negotiation was pressed urgently; so much so, that a pledge was given, that if the terms asked were acceded to, John Ballantyne and Co. would endeavour to wind up their concerns, and cease, as soon as possible, to be publishers."

Mr. Cadell adds:—

> "I need hardly remind you that this was a period of very great general difficulty in the money market. It was the crisis of the war. The public expenditure had reached an enormous height; and even the most prosperous mercantile houses were often pinched to sustain their credit. It may easily, therefore, be supposed that the Messrs Ballantyne had during many months besieged every banker's door in Edinburgh, and that their agents had done the like in London."

The most important of the requests which the labouring house made to Constable was, that he should forthwith take entirely to himself the stock, copyright, and future management of the Edinburgh Annual Register. Upon examining the state of this book, however, Constable found that the loss on it had never been less than £1000 per annum, and he therefore declined that matter for the present. He promised, however, to consider seriously the means he might have of ultimately relieving them from the pressure of the Register, and, in the mean time, offered to take 300 sets of the stock on hand. The other purchases he finally made on the 18th of May, were considerable portions of Weber's unhappy Beaumont and Fletcher—of an edition of Defoe's novels, in twelve volumes—of a collection entitled Tales of the East, in three large volumes, 8vo, double columned—and of another in one volume, called Popular Tales—about 800 copies of the Vision of Don Roderick—and a fourth of the remaining copyright of Rokeby, price £700. The immediate accommodation thus received amounted to £2000; and Scott, who had personally conducted the latter part of the negotiation, writes thus to his junior partner, who had gone a week or two earlier to London in quest of some similar assistance there:—

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* Mr. Hunter died in March, 1812.

To Mr. John Ballantyne, care of Messrs Longman & Co., London.

"Printing-office, May 18th, 1813.

"Dear John,

"After many *offs* and *ons*, and as many *projets* and *contre-projets* as the treaty of Amiens, I have at length concluded a treaty with Constable, in which I am sensible he has gained a great advantage;[*] but what could I do amidst the disorder and pressure of so many demands? The arrival of your long-dated bills decided my giving in, for what could James or I do with them? I trust this sacrifice has cleared our way, but many rubs remain; nor am I, after these hard skirmishes, so able to meet them by my proper credit. Constable, however, will be a zealous ally; and for the first time these many weeks I shall lay my head on a quiet pillow, for now I do think that, by our joint exertions, we shall get well through the storm, save Beaumont from depreciation, get a partner in our heavy concerns, reef our topsails, and move on securely under an easy sail. And if, on the one hand, I have sold my gold too cheap, I have, on the other, turned my lead to gold. Brewster[†] and Singers[‡] are the only heavy things to which I have not given a blue eye. Had your news of Cadell's sale[§] reached us here, I could not have harpooned my grampus so deeply as I have done, as nothing but Rokeby would have barbed the hook.

"Adieu, my dear John. I have the most sincere regard for you, and you may depend on my considering your interest with quite as much attention as my own. If I have ever expressed myself with irritation in speaking of this business, you must impute it to the sudden, extensive, and unexpected embarrassments in which I found myself involved all at once. If to your real goodness of heart and integrity, and to the quickness and acuteness of your talents, you added habits of more universal circumspection, and, above all, the courage to tell disagreeable truths to those whom you hold in regard, I pronounce that the world never held such a man of business. These it must be your study to add to your other good qualities. Mean time, as some one says to Swift, I love you with all your failings. Pray make an effort and love me with all mine. Yours truly, W. S."

Three days afterwards, Scott resumes the subject as follows:—

To Mr. John Ballantyne, London.

"Edinburgh, 21st May, 1813.

"Dear John,

"Let it never escape your recollection, that shutting your own eyes, or blinding those of your friends, upon the actual state of business, is the high road to ruin.

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[*] "These and after purchases of books from the stock of J. Ballantyne and Co. were resold to the trade by Constable's firm, at less than one-half and one-third of the prices at which they were thus obtained."—*Note from Mr. R. Cadell.*

[†] Dr. Brewster's edition of Ferguson's Astronomy, 2 vols. 8vo, with plates, 4to, Edin. 1811. 36s.

[‡] Dr. Singers' General View of the County of Dumfries, 8vo. Edin. 1812. 18s.

[§] A trade sale of Messrs. Cadell and Davies in the Strand.

Meanwhile, we have recovered our legs for a week or two. Constable will, I think, come in to the Register. He is most anxious to maintain the printing-office: he sees most truly that the more we print the less we publish; and for the same reason he will, I think, help us off with our heavy quire-stock.

"I was aware of the distinction between the *state* and the *calendar* as to the latter including the printing-office bills, and I summed and docked them (they are marked with red ink), but there is still a difference of £2000 and upwards on the calendar against the business. I sometimes fear that, between the long dates of your bills, and the tardy settlements of the Edinburgh trade, some difficulties will occur even in June; and July I always regard with deep anxiety. As for loss, if I get out without public exposure, I shall not greatly regard the rest. Radcliffe the physician said, when he lost £2000 on the South-Sea scheme, it was only going up 2000 pair of stairs; I say, it is only writing 2000 couplets, and the account is balanced. More of this hereafter. Yours truly,

W. Scott.

"P.S. James has behaved very well during this whole transaction, and has been most steadily attentive to business. I am convinced that the more he works the better his health will be. One or other of you will need to be constantly in the printing-office henceforward—it is the sheet-anchor."

The allusion in this *postscript* to James Ballantyne's health reminds me that Scott's letters to himself are full of hints on that subject, even from a very early period of their connexion; and these hints are all to the same effect. James was a man of lazy habits, and not a little addicted to the more solid, and perhaps more dangerous, part of the indulgences of the table. One letter (dated Ashestiel 1810) will be a sufficient specimen:—

To Mr. James Ballantyne.

"My dear James,

"I am very sorry for the state of your health, and should be still more so, were I not certain that I can prescribe for you as well as any physician in Edinburgh. You have naturally an athletic constitution and a hearty stomach, and these agree very ill with a sedentary life and the habits of indolence which it brings on. Your stomach thus gets weak, and from those complaints of all others arise most certainly flatulence, hypochondria, and all the train of unpleasant feelings connected with indigestion. We all know the horrible sensation of the nightmare arises from the same cause which gives those waking nightmares commonly called the blue devils. You must positively put yourself on a regimen as to eating, not for a month or two, but for a year at least, and take regular exercise—and my life for yours. I know this by myself, for if I were to eat and drink in town as I do here, it would soon finish me, and yet I am sensible I live too genially in Edinburgh as it is. Yours very truly,

W. Scott."

Among Scott's early pets at Abbotsford there was a huge raven, whose powers of speech were remarkable, far beyond any parrot's that he had ever met with; and who died in consequence of an excess of the kind to which James Ballantyne was addicted. Thenceforth, Scott often repeated to his old friend, and occasionally scribbled by way of postscript to his notes on business—

"When you are craving,
Remember the Raven."

Sometimes the formula is varied to—

"When you've dined half,
Think on poor Ralph!"

His preachments of regularity in book-keeping to John, and of abstinence from good cheer to James Ballantyne, were equally vain: but on the other hand it must be allowed that they had some reason for displeasure—(the more felt because they durst not, like him, express their feelings)—when they found that scarcely had these "hard skirmishes" terminated in the bargain of May 18th, before Scott was preparing fresh embarrassments for himself, by commencing a negotiation for a considerable addition to his property at Abbotsford. As early as the 20th of June, he writes to Constable as being already aware of this matter, and alleges his anxiety "to close at once with a very capricious person," as the only reason that could have induced him to make up his mind to sell the whole copyright of an as yet unwritten poem, to be entitled "The Nameless Glen." This copyright he then offered to dispose of to Constable for £5000; adding, "this is considerably less in proportion than I have already made on the share of Rokeby sold to yourself, and surely that is no unfair admeasurement." A long correspondence ensued, in the course of which Scott mentions "the Lord of the Isles," as a title which had suggested itself to him in place of "the Nameless Glen;" but as the negotiation did not succeed, I may pass its details. The new property which Scott was so eager to acquire, was that hilly tract stretching from the old Roman road near Turn-again towards the Cauldshiels Loch: a then desolate and naked mountain-mere, which he likens, in a letter of this summer (to Lady Louisa Stewart), to the lake of the Genie and the Fisherman in the Arabian Tale. To obtain this lake at one extremity of his estate, as a contrast to the Tweed at the other, was a prospect for which hardly any sacrifice would have appeared too much; and he contrived to gratify his wishes in the course of that July, to which he had spoken of himself in May as looking forward "with the deepest anxiety."

Nor was he, I must add, more able to control some of his minor tastes. I find him writing to Mr. Terry, on the 20th of June, about "that splendid lot of ancient armour, advertised by Winstanley," a celebrated auctioneer in London, of which he had the strongest fancy to make his spoil, though he was at a loss to know where it should be placed when it reached Abbotsford; and on the 2d of July, this acquisition also having been settled, he says to the same correspondent:—

> "I have written to Mr. Winstanley. My bargain with Constable was otherwise arranged, but Little John is to find the needful article, and I shall take care of Mr. Winstanley's interest, who has behaved too handsomely in this matter to be trusted to the mercy of our little friend the Picaroon, who is, notwithstanding his many excellent qualities, a little on the score of old Gobbo—doth somewhat smack—somewhat grow to. We shall be at Abbotsford on the 12th, and hope soon to see you there. I am fitting up a small room above *Peter-house*, where an unceremonious bachelor may consent to do penance, though the place is a cock-loft, and the access that which leads many a bold fellow to his last nap—a ladder."*

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* The court of offices, built on the *haugh* at Abbotsford in 1812, included a house for the faithful coachman, Peter Mathieson. One of Scott's Cantabrigian friends, Mr. W. S. Rose, gave the whole pile soon afterwards the name, which it retained to the end, of *Peter-House*. The loft at Peter-House continued to be occupied by occasional bachelor guests until the existing mansion was completed.

And a few weeks later, he says, in the same sort, to his sister-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Scott,—

"In despite of these hard times, which affect my patrons the booksellers very much, I am buying old books and old armour as usual, and adding to what your old friend* Burns calls—

'A fouth of auld nick-nackets,
Rusty airn caps and jingling jackets,
Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets
A towmont gude,
And parritch-pats and auld saut-backets,
Afore the flude.'"

Notwithstanding all this, it must have been with a most uneasy mind that he left Edinburgh to establish himself at Abbotsford that July. The assistance of Constable had not been granted, indeed it had not been asked, to an extent at all adequate for the difficulties of the case; and I have now to transcribe, with pain and reluctance, some extracts from Scott's letters, during the ensuing autumn, which speak the language of anxious, and indeed humiliating distress; and give a most lively notion of the incurable recklessness of his younger partner.

To Mr. John Ballantyne.

"Abbotsford, Saturday, 24th July.

"Dear John,

"I sent you the order, and have only to hope it arrived safe and in good time. I waked the boy at three o'clock myself, having slept little, less on account of the money than of the time. Surely you should have written, three or four days before, the probable amount of the deficit, and, as on former occasions, I would have furnished you with means of meeting it. These expresses, besides every other inconvenience, excite surprise in my family and in the neighbourhood. I know no justifiable occasion for them but the unexpected return of a bill. I do not consider you as answerable for the success of plans, but I do and must hold you responsible for giving me, in distinct and plain terms, your opinion as to any difficulties which may occur, and that in such time that I may make arrangements to obviate them if possible.

"Of course, if any thing has gone wrong you will come out here to-morrow. But if, as I hope and trust, the cash arrived safe, you will write to me, under cover to the Duke of Buccleuch, Drumlanrig Castle, Dumfries-shire. I shall set out for that place on Monday morning early. W. S."

To Mr. James Ballantyne.

"Abbotsford, 25th July, 1813.

"Dear James,

"I address the following jobation for John to you, that you may see whether I do not well to be angry, and enforce upon him the necessity of constantly writing his fears as well as his hopes. You should rub him often on this point, for his recollection becomes rusty the instant I leave town and am not in the way to rack him with constant questions. I hope the presses are doing well, and that you are quite stout again. Yours truly, W. S."

Enclosure.

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[*] Mrs. Thomas Scott had met Burns frequently in early life at Dumfries. Her brother, the late Mr. David MacCulloch, was a great favourite with the poet, and the best singer of his songs that I ever heard.

To Mr. John Ballantyne.

"My good friend John,

"The post brings me no letter from you, which I am much surprised at, as you must suppose me anxious to learn that your express arrived. I think he must have reached you before post-hours, and James or you *might* have found a minute to say so in a single line. I once more request that you will be a business-like correspondent, and state your provisions for every week prospectively. I do not expect you to *warrant them*, which you rather perversely seem to insist is my wish, but I do want to be aware of their nature and extent, that I may provide against the possibility of miscarriage. The calendar, to which you refer me, tells me what sums are due, but cannot tell your shifts to pay them, which are naturally altering with circumstances, and of which alterations I request to have due notice. You say you *could not suppose* Sir W. Forbes would have refused the long dated bills; but that you *had* such an apprehension is clear, both because in the calendar these bills were rated two months lower, and because, three days before, you wrote me an enigmatical expression of your apprehensions, instead of saying plainly there was a chance of your wanting £350, when I would have sent you an order to be used conditionally.

"All I desire is unlimited confidence and frequent correspondence, and that you will give me weekly at least the fullest anticipation of your resources, and the probability of their being effectual. I may be disappointed in my own, of which you shall have equally timeous notice. Omit no exertions to procure the use of money, even for a month or six weeks, for time is most precious. The large balance due in January from the trade, and individuals, which I cannot reckon at less than £4000, will put us finally to rights; and it will be a shame to founder within sight of harbour. The greatest risk we run is from such ill-considered despatches as those of Friday. Suppose that I had gone to Drumlanrig—suppose the pony had set up—suppose a thousand things—and we were ruined for want of your telling your apprehensions in due time. Do not plague yourself to vindicate this sort of management; but if you have escaped the consequences (as to which you have left me uncertain), thank God, and act more cautiously another time. It was quite the same to me on what day I sent that draft; indeed it must have been so if I had the money in my cash account, and if I had not, the more time given me to provide it the better.

"Now, do not affect to suppose that my displeasure arises from your not having done your utmost to realize funds, and that utmost having failed. It is one mode, to be sure, of exculpation, to suppose one's self accused of something they are not charged with, and then to make a querulous or indignant defence, and complain of the injustice of the accuser. The head and front of your offending is precisely your not writing explicitly, and I request this may not happen again. It is your fault, and I believe arises either from an ill-judged idea of smoothing matters to me—as if I were not behind the curtain—or a general reluctance to allow that any danger is near, until it is almost unparriable. I shall be very sorry if any thing I have said gives you pain; but the matter is too serious for all of us to be passed over without giving you my explicit sentiments. To-morrow I set out for Drumlanrig, and shall not hear from you till Tuesday or Wednesday. Make yourself master of the post-town—Thornhill, probably, or Sanquhar. As Sir W. F. & Co. have cash to meet my order, nothing, I think, can have gone wrong, unless the boy perished by the way. Therefore, in faith and hope, and—that I may lack none of the Christian virtues—in charity with your dilatory worship, I remain very truly yours,

W. S."

Scott proceeded, accordingly, to join a gay and festive circle, whom the Duke of Buccleuch had assembled about him on first taking possession of the magnificent Castle of Drumlanrig, in Nithsdale, the principal messuage of the dukedom of Queensberry, which had recently lapsed into his family. But, *post equitem sedet atra cura*—another of John Ballantyne's unwelcome missives, rendered necessary by a neglect of precisely the same kind as before, reached him in the midst of this scene of rejoicing. On the 31st, he again writes:—

To Mr. John Ballantyne, Bookseller, Edinburgh.

"Drumlanrig, Friday.

"Dear John,

"I enclose the order. Unfortunately, the Drumlanrig post only goes thrice-a-week; but the Marquis of Queensberry, who carries this to Dumfries, has promised that the guard of the mail-coach shall deliver it by five to-morrow. I was less anxious, as your note said you could clear this month. It is a cruel thing, that no State you furnish excludes the arising of such unexpected claims as this for the taxes on the printing-office. What unhappy management, to suffer them to run ahead in such a manner!—but it is in vain to complain. Were it not for your strange concealments, I should anticipate no difficulty in winding up these matters. But who can reckon upon a State where claims are kept out of view until they are in the hands of a *writer?* If you have no time to say that *this* comes safe to hand, I suppose James may favour me so far. Yours truly, W. S.

"Let the guard be rewarded.

"Let me know exactly what you *can* do and *hope* to do for next month; for it signifies nothing raising money for you, unless I see it is to be of real service. Observe, I make you responsible for nothing but a fair statement. The guard is known to the Marquis, who has good-naturedly promised to give him this letter with his own hand; so it must reach you in time, though probably past five on Saturday."

Another similar application reached Scott the day after the guard delivered his packet. He writes thus, in reply:—

To Mr. John Ballantyne.

"Drumlanrig, Sunday.

"Dear John,

"I trust you got my letter yesterday by five, with the draft enclosed. I return your draft accepted. On Wednesday I think of leaving this place, where, but for these damned affairs, I should have been very happy. W. S."

Scott had been for some time under an engagement to meet the Marquis of Abercorn at Carlisle, in the first week of August, for the transaction of some business connected with his brother Thomas's late administration of that nobleman's Scottish affairs: and he had designed to pass from Drumlanrig to Carlisle for this purpose, without going back to Abbotsford. In consequence of these repeated harassments, however, he so far altered his plans as to cut short his stay at Drumlanrig, and turn homewards for two or three days, where James Ballantyne met him with such a statement as in some measure relieved his mind.

He then proceeded to fulfil his engagement with Lord Abercorn, whom he encountered travelling in a very peculiar style between Carlisle and Longtown. The ladies of the family and the household occupied four or five carriages, all drawn by the Marquis's own horses, while the noble Lord himself brought up the rear, mounted on a small pony, but decorated over his riding dress with the riband and star of the Garter. On meeting the cavalcade, Scott turned with them, and he was not a little amused when they reached the village of Longtown, which he had ridden through an hour or two before, with the preparations which he found there made for the dinner of the party. The Marquis's major-domo and cook had arrived there at an early hour in the morning, and every thing was now arranged for his reception in the paltry little public-house, as nearly as possible in the style usual in his own lordly mansions. The ducks and geese that had been dabbling three or four hours ago in the village-pond, were now ready to make their appearance under numberless disguises as *entrées;* a regular bill-of-fare flanked the noble Marquis's allotted cover; every huckabuck towel in the place had been pressed to do service as a napkin; and, that nothing might be wanting in the mimicry of splendour, the landlady's poor remnants of crockery and pewter had been furbished up, and mustered in solemn order on a crazy old beauffet, which was to represent a sideboard worthy of Sardanapalus. I think it worth while to preserve this anecdote, which Scott delighted in telling, as perhaps the last relic of a style of manners, now passed away, and never likely to be revived among us.

Having despatched this dinner and his business, Scott again turned southwards, intending to spend a few days with Mr. Morritt at Rokeby; but on reaching Penrith, the landlord there, who was his old acquaintance (Mr. Buchanan), placed a letter in his hands: *ecce iterum* —it was once more a cry of distress from John Ballantyne. He thus answered it—

To Mr. John Ballantyne.

"Penrith, August 10, 1813.

"Dear John,

"I enclose you an order for £350. I shall remain at Rokeby until Saturday or Sunday, and be at Abbotsford on Wednesday at latest.

"I hope the printing-office is going on well. I fear, from the state of accompts between the companies, restrictions on the management and expense will be unavoidable, which may trench upon James's comforts. I cannot observe hitherto that the printing-office is paying off, but rather adding to its embarrassments; and it cannot be thought that I have either means or inclination to support a losing concern at the rate of £200 a-month. If James could find a moneyed partner, an active man who understood the commercial part of the business, and would superintend the conduct of the cash, it might be the best for all parties; for I really am not adequate to the fatigue of mind which these affairs occasion me, though I must do the best to struggle through them. Believe me yours, &c., W. S."

At Brough he encountered a messenger who brought him such a painful account of Mrs. Morritt's health, that he abandoned his intention of proceeding to Rokeby; and, indeed, it was much better that he should be at Abbotsford again as soon as possible, for his correspondence shows a continued succession, during the three or four ensuing weeks, of the same annoyances that had pursued him to Drumlanrig and to Penrith. By his desire, the Ballantynes had, it would seem, before the middle of August, laid a statement of their affairs before Constable. Though the statement was not so clear and full as Scott had wished it to be, Constable, on considering it, at once assured them, that to go on raising money by driblets would never effectually relieve them; that, in short, one or both of the companies must stop, unless Mr. Scott could find means to lay his hand, without farther delay, on at least £4000; and I gather that, by way of inducing Constable himself to come forward with part at least of this supply, John Ballantyne again announced his intention of forthwith abandoning the bookselling business altogether, and making an effort to establish himself—on a plan which Constable had shortly before suggested—as an auctioneer in Edinburgh. The following letters need no comment:—

To Mr. John Ballantyne.

"Abbotsford, Aug. 16, 1813.

"Dear John,

"I am quite satisfied it is impossible for J. B. & Co. to continue business longer than is absolutely necessary for the sale of stock and extrication of their affairs. The fatal injury which their credit has sustained, as well as your adopting a profession in which I sincerely hope you will be more fortunate, renders the closing of the bookselling business inevitable. With regard to the printing, it is my intention to retire from that also so soon as I can possibly do so with safety to myself, and with the regard I shall always entertain for James's interest. Whatever loss I may sustain will be preferable to the life I have lately led, when I seem surrounded by a sort of magic circle, which neither permits me to remain at home in peace, nor to stir abroad with pleasure. Your first exertion as an auctioneer may probably be on 'that distinguished, select, and inimitable collection of books, made by an amateur of this city retiring from business.' I do not feel either health or confidence in my own powers sufficient to authorize me to take a long price for a new poem, until these affairs shall have been in some measure digested. This idea has been long running in my head, but the late fatalities which have attended this business have quite decided my resolution. I will write to James to-morrow, being at present annoyed with a severe headach. Yours truly,

W. Scott."

Were I to transcribe all the letters to which these troubles gave rise, I should fill a volume before I had reached the end of another twelvemonth. The two next I shall quote are dated on the same day (the 24th August), which may, in consequence of the answer the second of them received, be set down as determining the *crisis* of 1813.

To Mr. James Ballantyne.

"Abbotsford, 24th August, 1813.

"Dear James,

"Mr. Constable's advice is, as I have always found it, sound, sensible, and friendly—and I shall be guided by it. But I have no wealthy friend who would join in security with me to such an extent; and to apply in quarters where I might be refused, would ensure disclosure. I conclude John has shown Mr. C. the state of the affairs; if not, I would wish him to do so directly. If the proposed accommodation could be granted to the firm on my personally joining in the security, the whole matter would be quite safe, for I have to receive in the course of the winter some large sums from my father's estate.[*] Besides which, I shall certainly be able to go to press in November with a new poem; or, if Mr. Constable's additional security would please the bankers better, I could ensure Mr. C. against the possibility of loss, by assigning the copyrights, together with that of the new poem, or even my library, in his relief. In fact, if he looks into the affairs, he will I think see that there is no prospect of any eventual loss to the creditors, though I may be a loser myself. My property here is unincumbered; so is my house in Castle Street; and I have no debts out of my own family, excepting a part of the price of Abbotsford, which I am to retain for four years. So that, literally, I have no claims upon me unless those arising out of this business; and when it is considered that my income is above £2000 a-year, even if the printing-office pays nothing, I should hope no one can possibly be a loser by me. I am sure I would strip myself to my shirt rather than it should be the case: and my only reason for wishing to stop the concern was to do open justice to all persons. It must have been a bitter pill to me. I can more confidently expect some aid from Mr. Constable, or from Longman's house, because they can look into the concern and satisfy

Clerkship,	£1300
Sheriffdom,	300
Mrs. Scott,	200
Interest,	100
Somers, (say)	200
	£2100

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[*] He probably alludes to the final settlement of accounts with the Marquis of Abercorn.

themselves how little chance there is of their being losers, which others cannot do. Perhaps between them they might manage to assist us with the credit necessary, and go on in winding up the concern by occasional acceptances.

"An odd thing has happened. I have a letter, by order of the Prince Regent, offering me the laureateship, in the most flattering terms. Were I my own man, as you call it, I would refuse this offer (with all gratitude); but, as I am situated, £300 or £400 a-year is not to be sneezed at upon a point of poetical honour—and it makes me a better man to that extent. I have not yet written, however. I will say little about Constable's handsome behaviour, but shall not forget it. It is needless to say I shall wish him to be consulted in every step that is taken. If I should lose all I advanced to this business, I should be less vexed than I am at this moment. I am very busy with Swift at present, but shall certainly come to town if it is thought necessary; but I should first wish Mr. Constable to look into the affairs to the bottom. Since I have personally superintended them, they have been winding up very fast, and we are now almost within sight of harbour. I will also own it was partly ill-humour at John's blunder last week that made me think of throwing things up. Yours truly, W. S."

After writing and despatching this letter, an idea occurred to Scott that there was a quarter, not hitherto alluded to in any of these anxious epistles, from which he might consider himself as entitled to ask assistance, not only with little, if any, chance of a refusal, but (owing to particular circumstances) without incurring any very painful sense of obligation. On the 25th, he says to John Ballantyne—

"After some meditation, last night, it occurred to me I had some title to ask the Duke of Buccleuch's guarantee to a cash account for £4000, as Constable proposes. I have written to him accordingly, and have very little doubt that he will be my surety. If this cash account be in view, Mr. Constable will certainly *assist us* until the necessary writings are made out—I beg your pardon—I daresay I am very stupid; but very often you don't consider that I can't follow details which would be quite obvious to a man of business—for instance, you tell me daily, 'that *if* the sums I count upon *are* forthcoming, the results must be as I suppose.' But—in a week—the scene is changed, and all I can do, and more, is inadequate to bring about these results. I protest I don't know if at this moment £4000 *will* clear us out. After all, you are vexed, and so am I; and it is needless to wrangle who has a right to be angry. Commend me to James. Yours truly, W. S."

Having explained to the Duke of Buccleuch the position in which he stood—obliged either to procure some guarantee which would enable him to raise £4000, or to sell abruptly all his remaining interest in the copyright of his works; and repeated the statement of his personal property and income, as given in the preceding letter to James Ballantyne—Scott says to his noble friend:—

"I am not asking nor desiring any loan from your Grace, but merely the honour of your sanction to my credit as a good man for £4000; and the motive of your Grace's interference would be sufficiently obvious to the London Shylocks, as your constant kindness and protection is no secret to the world. Will your Grace consider whether you can do what I propose, in conscience and safety, and favour me with your answer?—I have a very flattering offer from the Prince Regent, of his own free motion, to make me poet-laureate; I am very much embarrassed by it. I am, on the one hand, afraid of giving offence where no one would willingly offend, and perhaps losing an opportunity of smoothing the way to my youngsters through life; on the other hand, the office is a ridiculous one, somehow or other—they and I should be well quizzed,—yet that I should not mind. My real feeling of reluctance lies deeper—it is, that favoured as I have been by the public, I should be considered, with some justice, I fear, as engrossing a petty emolument which might do real service to some poorer brother of the Muses. I shall be most anxious to have your Grace's advice on this subject. There seems something churlish, and perhaps conceited, in repelling a favour so handsomely offered on the part of the Sovereign's representative—and on the other hand, I feel much disposed to shake myself free from it. I should make but a bad courtier, and an ode-maker is described by Pope as a poet out of his way or out of his senses. I will find some excuse for protracting my reply till I can have the advantage of your Grace's opinion; and remain, in the mean time, very truly

Your obliged and grateful

WALTER SCOTT."

"P. S.—I trust your Grace will not suppose me capable of making such a request as the enclosed, upon any idle or unnecessary speculation; but, as I stand situated, it is a matter of deep interest to me to prevent these copyrights from being disposed of either hastily or at under prices. I could have half the booksellers in London for my sureties, on a hint of a new poem; but bankers do not like people in trade, and my brains are not ready to spin another web. So your grace must take me under your princely care, as in the days of lang syne; and I think I can say, upon the sincerity of an honest man, there is not the most distant chance of your having any trouble or expense through my means."

The Duke's answer was in all respects such as might have been looked for from the generous kindness and manly sense of his character.

To Walter Scott, Esq., Abbotsford.

"Drumlanrig Castle, August 28th, 1813.

"My dear sir,

"I received yesterday your letter of the 24th. I shall with pleasure comply with your request of guaranteeing the £4000. You must, however, furnish me with the form of a letter to this effect, as I am completely ignorant of transactions of this nature.

"I am never willing to *offer* advice, but when my opinion is asked by a friend I am ready to give it. As to the offer of His Royal Highness to appoint you laureate, I shall frankly say that I should be mortified to see you hold a situation which, by the general concurrence of the world, is stamped ridiculous. There is no good reason why this should be so; but so it is. *Walter Scott, Poet Laureate*, ceases to be the Walter Scott of the Lay, Marmion, &c. Any future poem of yours would not come forward with the same probability of a successful reception. The poet laureate would stick to you and your productions like a piece of *court plaster*. Your muse has hitherto been independent—don't put her into harness. We know how lightly she trots along when left to her natural paces, but do not try driving. I would write frankly and openly to His Royal Highness, but with respectful gratitude, for he *has* paid you a compliment. I would not fear to state that you had hitherto written when in poetic mood, but feared to trammel yourself with a fixed periodical exertion; and I cannot but conceive that His Royal Highness, who has much taste, will at once see the many objections which you must have to his proposal, but which you cannot write. Only think of being chaunted and recitatived by a parcel of hoarse and squeaking choristers on a birthday, for the edification of the bishops, pages, maids of honour, and gentlemen-pensioners! Oh, horrible, thrice horrible! Yours sincerely,

BUCCLEUCH, &c."

The letter which first announced the Prince Regent's proposal, was from his Royal Highness's librarian, Dr. James Stanier Clarke; but before Scott answered it he had received a more formal notification from the late Marquis of Hertford, then Lord Chamberlain. I shall transcribe both these documents.

To Walter Scott, Esq. Edinburgh.

"Pavilion, Brighton, August 18, 1813.

"My dear sir

"Though I have never had the honour of being introduced to you, you have frequently been pleased to convey to me very kind and flattering messages,* and I trust, therefore, you will allow me, without any further ceremony, to say—That I took an early opportunity this morning of seeing the Prince Regent, who arrived here late yesterday; and I then delivered to his Royal Highness my earnest wish and anxious desire that the vacant situation of poet laureate might be conferred on you. The Prince replied, 'that you had already been written to, and that if you wished it every thing would be settled as I could desire.'

"I hope, therefore, I may be allowed to congratulate you on this event. You are the man to whom it ought first to have been offered, and it gave me sincere pleasure to find that those sentiments of high approbation which my Royal Master had so often expressed towards you in private, were now so openly and honourably displayed in public. Have the goodness, dear sir, to receive this intrusive letter with your accustomed courtesy, and believe me, yours very sincerely,

J. S. Clarke,
Librarian to H. R. H. the Prince Regent."

To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.

"Ragley, 31st August, 1813.

"Sir,

"I thought it my duty to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, to express to him my humble opinion that I could not make so creditable a choice as in your person for the office, now vacant, of poet laureate. I am now authorized to offer it to you, which I would have taken an earlier opportunity of doing, but that, till this morning, I have had no occasion of seeing his Royal Highness since Mr. Pye's death. I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

Ingram Hertford."

The following letters conclude this matter:

To the Most Noble the Marquis of Hertford, &c. &c. Ragley, Warwickshire.

"Abbotsford, 4th Sept.

"My Lord,

"I am this day honoured with your Lordship's letter of the 31st August, tendering for my acceptance the situation of poet laureate in the Royal Household. I shall always think it the highest honour of my life to have been the object of the good opinion implied in your Lordship's recommendation, and in the gracious acquiescence of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent. I humbly trust I shall not forfeit sentiments so highly valued, although I find myself under the necessity of declining, with every acknowledgment of respect and gratitude, a situation above my deserts, and offered to me in a manner so very flattering. The duties attached to the office of poet laureate are not indeed very formidable, if judged of by the manner in which they have sometimes been discharged. But an individual selected from the literary characters of Britain, upon the honourable principle expressed in your Lordship's letter, ought not, in justice to your Lordship, to his own reputation, but above all to his Royal Highness, to accept of the office, unless he were conscious of the power of filling it respectably, and attaining to excellence in the execution of the tasks which it imposes. This confidence I am so far from possessing, that, on the contrary, with all the advantages which do now, and I trust ever will, present themselves to the poet whose task it may be to commemorate the events of his Royal Highness's administration, I am certain I should feel myself inadequate to the fitting discharge of the regularly recurring duty of periodical composition, and should thus at once disappoint the expectation of the public, and, what would give me still more pain, discredit the nomination of his Royal Highness.

"Will your Lordship permit me to add, that though far from being wealthy, I already hold two official situations in the line of my profession, which afford a respectable income. It becomes me, therefore, to avoid the appearance of engrossing one of the few appointments which seem specially adapted for the provision of those whose lives have been dedicated exclusively to literature, and who too often derive from their labours more credit than emolument.

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* The Royal librarian had forwarded to Scott presentation copies of his successive publications—The Progress of Maritime Discovery—Falconer's Shipwreck, with a Life of the Author—Naufragia—A Life of Nelson, in two quarto volumes, &c. &c. &c.

"Nothing could give me greater pain than being thought ungrateful to his Royal Highness's goodness, or insensible to the honourable distinction his undeserved condescension has been pleased to bestow upon me. I have to trust to your Lordship's kindness for laying at the feet of his Royal Highness, in the way most proper and respectful, my humble, grateful, and dutiful thanks, with these reasons for declining a situation which, though every way superior to my deserts, I should chiefly have valued as a mark of his Royal Highness's approbation.

For your Lordship's unmerited goodness, as well as for the trouble you have had upon this occasion, I can only offer you my respectful thanks, and entreat that you will be pleased to believe me, my Lord Marquis, your Lordship's much obliged and much honoured humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

To His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c., Drumlanrig Castle.

"Abbotsford, Sept. 5, 1813.

"My dear Lord Duke,

"Good advice is easily followed when it jumps with our own sentiments and inclinations. I no sooner found mine fortified by your Grace's opinion than I wrote to Lord Hertford, declining the laurel in the most civil way I could imagine. I also wrote to the Prince's librarian, who had made himself active on the occasion, dilating at somewhat more length than I thought respectful to the Lord Chamberlain, my reasons for declining the intended honour. My wife has made a copy of the last letter, which I enclose for your Grace's perusal—there is no occasion either to preserve or return it—but I am desirous you should know what I have put my apology upon, for I may reckon on its being misrepresented. I certainly should never have survived the recitative described by your Grace—it is a part of the etiquette I was quite unprepared for, and should have sunk under it. It is curious enough that Drumlanrig should always have been the refuge of bards who decline court promotion. Gay, I think, refused to be a gentleman-usher, or some such post: and I am determined to abide by my post of Grand Ecuyer Trenchant of the Chateau, varied for that of tale-teller of an evening.

"I will send your Grace a copy of the letter of guarantee when I receive it from London. By an arrangement with Longman and Co., the great booksellers in Paternoster-row, I am about to be enabled to place their security, as well as my own, between your Grace and the possibility of hazard. But your kind readiness to forward a transaction which is of such great importance both to my fortune and comfort, can never be forgotten—although it can scarce make me more than I have always been, my dear Lord, your Grace's much obliged and truly faithful

WALTER SCOTT."

Copy—Enclosure.

To the Rev. J. S. Clarke, &c. &c. &c., Pavilion, Brighton.

"Abbotsford, 4th September, 1813.

"Sir,

"On my return to this cottage, after a short excursion, I was at once surprised and deeply interested by the receipt of your letter. I shall always consider it as the proudest incident of my life that his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, whose taste in literature is so highly distinguished, should have thought of naming me to the situation of poet laureate. I feel, therefore, no small embarrassment lest I should incur the suspicion of churlish ingratitude in declining an appointment in every point of view so far above my deserts, but which I should chiefly have valued as conferred by the unsolicited generosity of his Royal Highness, and as entitling me to the distinction of terming myself an immediate servant of his Majesty. But I have to trust to your goodness in representing to his Royal Highness, with my most grateful, humble, and dutiful acknowledgments, the circumstances which compel me to decline the honour which his undeserved favour has proposed for me. The poetical pieces I have hitherto composed have uniformly been the hasty production of impulses, which I must term fortunate, since they have attracted his Royal Highness's notice and approbation. But I strongly fear, or rather am absolutely certain, that I should feel myself unable to justify, in the eye of the public, the choice of his Royal Highness, by a fitting discharge of the duties of an office which requires stated and periodical exertion. And although I am conscious how much this difficulty is lessened under the government of his Royal Highness, marked by paternal wisdom at home and successes abroad which seem to promise the liberation of Europe, I still feel that the necessity of a regular commemoration would trammel my powers of composition at the very time when it would be equally my pride and duty to tax them to the uttermost. There is another circumstance which weighs deeply in my mind while forming my present resolution. I have already the honour to hold two appointments under government, not usually conjoined, and which afford an income, far indeed from wealth, but amounting to decent independence. I fear, therefore, that in accepting one of the few situations which our establishment holds forth as the peculiar provision of literary men, I might be justly censured as availing myself of his Royal Highness's partiality to engross more than my share of the public revenue, to the prejudice of competitors equally meritorious at least, and otherwise unprovided for; and as this calculation will be made by thousands who know that I have reaped great advantages by the favour of the public, without being aware of the losses which it has been my misfortune to sustain, I may fairly reckon that it will terminate even more to my prejudice than if they had the means of judging accurately of my real circumstances. I have thus far, sir, frankly exposed to you, for his Royal Highness's favourable consideration, the feelings which induce me to decline an appointment offered in a manner so highly calculated to gratify, I will not say my vanity only, but my sincere feelings of devoted attachment to the crown and constitution of my country, and to the person of his Royal Highness, by whom its government has been so worthily administered. No consideration on earth would give me so much pain as the idea of my real feelings being misconstrued on this occasion, or that I should be supposed stupid enough not to estimate the value of his Royal Highness's favour, or so ungrateful as not to feel it as I ought. And you will relieve me from great anxiety if you will have the goodness to let me know if his Royal Highness is pleased to receive favourably my humble and grateful apology.

"I cannot conclude without expressing my sense of your kindness and of the trouble you have had upon this account, and I request you will believe me, sir, your obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick.

"Abbotsford, 4th September, 1813.

"My dear Southey,

"On my return here I found, to my no small surprise, a letter tendering me the laurel vacant by the death of the poetical Pye. I have declined the appointment, as being incompetent to the task of annual commemoration; but chiefly as being provided for in my professional department, and unwilling to incur the censure of engrossing the emolument attached to one of the few appointments which seems proper to be filled by a man of literature who has no other views in life. Will you forgive me, my dear friend, if I own I had you in my recollection. I have given Croker the hint, and otherwise endeavoured to throw the office into your option. I am uncertain if you will like it, for the laurel has certainly been tarnished by some of its wearers, and, as at present managed, its duties are inconvenient, and somewhat liable to ridicule. But the latter matter might be amended, as I think the Regent's good sense would lead him to lay aside these commemorations; and as to the former point, it has been worn by Dryden of old, and by Warton in modern days. If you quote my own refusal against me, I reply—first, I have been luckier than you in holding two offices not usually conjoined; secondly, I did not refuse it from any foolish prejudice against the situation, otherwise how durst I mention it to you, my elder brother in the muse?—but from a sort of internal hope that they would give it to you, upon whom it would be so much more worthily conferred. For I am not such an ass as not to know that you are my better in poetry, though I have had, probably but for a time, the tide of popularity in my favour. I have not time to add ten thousand other reasons, but I only wished to tell you how the matter was, and to beg you to think before you reject the offer which I flatter myself will be made to you. If I had not been, like Dogberry, a fellow with two gowns already, I should have jumped at it like a cock at a gooseberry. Ever yours most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

Immediately after Mr. Croker received Scott's letter here alluded to, Mr. Southey was invited to accept the vacant laurel; and, to the honour of the Prince Regent, when he signified that his acceptance must depend on the office being thenceforth so modified as to demand none of the old formal odes, leaving it to the poet-laureate to choose his own time for celebrating any great public event that might occur, his Royal Highness had the good sense and good taste at once to acquiesce in the propriety of this alteration. The office was thus relieved from the burden of ridicule which had, in spite of so many illustrious names, adhered to it; and though its emoluments did not in fact amount to more than £100 a-year (instead of the £300 or £400 at which Scott rated them when he declined it), they formed no unacceptable addition to Southey's income. Scott's answer to his brother poet's affectionate and grateful letter on the conclusion of this affair, is as follows.

To R. Southey, Esq. Keswick.

"Edinburgh, November 13, 1813.

"I do not delay, my dear Southey, to say my gratulor. Long may you live, as Paddy says, to rule over us, and to redeem the crown of Spenser and of Dryden to its pristine dignity. I am only discontented with the extent of your royal revenue, which I thought had been £400, or £300 at the very least. Is there no getting rid of that ridiculous modus, and requiring the *butt* in kind! I would have you think of it: I know no man so well entitled to Xeres sack as yourself, though many bards would make a better figure at drinking it. I should think that in due time a memorial might get some relief in this part of the appointment—it should be at least £100 wet and £100 dry. When you have carried your point of discarding the ode, and my point of getting the sack, you will be exactly in the situation of Davy in the farce, who stipulates for more wages, less work, and the key of the ale-cellar. I was greatly delighted with the circumstances of your investiture. It reminded me of the porters at Calais with Dr. Smollett's baggage, six of them seizing one small portmanteau, and bearing it in triumph to his lodgings. You see what it is to laugh at the superstitions of a gentleman-usher, as I think you do somewhere. 'The whirligig of time brings about his revenges.'

"Adieu, my dear Southey; my best wishes attend all that you do, and my best congratulations every good that attends you—yea, even this, the very least of Providence's mercies, as a poor clergyman said when pronouncing grace over a herring. I should like to know how the prince received you; his address is said to be excellent, and his knowledge of literature far from despicable. What a change of fortune even since the short time when we met! The great work of retribution is now rolling onward to consummation, yet am I not fully satisfied—*pereat iste*—there will be no permanent peace in Europe till Buonaparte sleeps with the tyrants of old. My best compliments attend Mrs. Southey and your family. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To avoid returning to the affair of the laureateship, I have placed together such letters concerning it as appeared important. I regret to say that, had I adhered to the chronological order of Scott's correspondence, ten out of every twelve letters between the date of his application to the Duke of Buccleuch, and his removal to Edinburgh on the 12th of November, would have continued to tell the same story of pecuniary difficulty, urgent and almost daily applications for new advances to the Ballantynes, and endeavours, more or less successful, but in no case effectually so, to relieve the pressure on the bookselling firm by sales of its heavy stock to the great publishing houses of Edinburgh and London. Whatever success these endeavours met with, appears to have been due either directly or indirectly to Mr. Constable; who did a great deal more than prudence would have warranted, in taking on himself the results of its unhappy adventures,—and, by his sagacious advice, enabled the distressed partners to procure similar assistance at the hands of others, who did not partake his own feelings of kindness and sympathy.

"I regret to learn," Scott writes to him on the 16th October, "that there is great danger of your exertions in our favour, which once promised so fairly, proving finally abortive, or at least being too tardy in their operation to work out our relief. If any thing more can be honourably and properly done to avoid a most unpleasant shock, I shall be most willing to do it; if not—God's will be done! There will be enough of property, including my private fortune, to pay every claim; and I have not used prosperity so ill, as greatly to fear adversity. But these things we will talk over at meeting; mean while believe me, with a sincere sense of your kindness and friendly views, very truly yours, W. S."

I have no wish to quote more largely from the letters which passed during this crisis between Scott and his partners. The pith and substance of his, to John Ballantyne at least, seems to be summed up in one brief *postscript*:—"For God's sake, treat me as a man, not as a milch-cow!"

The difficulties of the Ballantynes were by this time well known throughout the commercial circles not only of Edinburgh, but of London; and a report of their actual bankruptcy, with the addition that Scott was engaged as their surety to the extent of £20,000, found its way to Mr. Morritt about the beginning of November. This dear friend wrote to him, in the utmost anxiety, and made liberal offers of assistance in case the catastrophe might still be averted; but the term of Martinmas, always a critical one in Scotland, had passed before this letter reached Edinburgh, and Scott's answer will show symptoms of a clearing horizon. I think also there is one expression in it which could hardly have failed to convey to Mr. Morritt that his friend was involved, more deeply than he had ever acknowledged, in the concerns of the Messrs. Ballantyne.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park.

"Edinburgh, 20th November, 1813.

"I did not answer your very kind letter, my dear Morritt, until I could put your friendly heart to rest upon the report you have heard, which I could not do entirely until this term of Martinmas was passed. I have the pleasure to say that there is no truth whatever in the Ballantynes' reported bankruptcy. They have had severe difficulties for the last four months to make their resources balance the demands upon them, and I, having the price of Rokeby, and other moneys in their hands, have had considerable reason for apprehension, and no slight degree of plague and trouble. They have, however, been so well supported, that I have got out of hot water upon their account. They are winding up their bookselling concern with great regularity, and are to abide hereafter by the printing-office, which, with its stock, &c., will revert to them fairly.

"I have been able to redeem the offspring of my brain, and they are like to pay me like grateful children. This matter has set me a thinking about money more seriously than ever I did in my life, and I have begun by insuring my life for £4000, to secure some ready cash to my family should I slip girths suddenly. I think my other property, library, &c., may be worth about £12,000, and I have not much debt.

"Upon the whole, I see no prospect of any loss whatever. Although in the course of human events I may be disappointed, there certainly *can* be none to vex your kind and affectionate heart on my account. I am young, with a large official income, and if I lose any thing now, I have gained a great deal in my day. I cannot tell you, and will not attempt to tell you, how much I was affected by your letter—so much, indeed, that for several days I could not make my mind up to express myself on the subject. Thank God! all real danger was yesterday put over—and I will write, in two or three days, a funny letter, without any of these vile cash matters, of which it may be said there is no living with them nor without them. Ever yours, most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

All these annoyances produced no change whatever in Scott's habits of literary industry. During these anxious months of September, October, and November, he kept feeding James Ballantyne's press, from day to day, both with the annotated text of the closing volumes of Swift's works, and with the MS. of his Life of the Dean. He had also proceeded to mature in his own mind the plan of the Lord of the Isles, and executed such a portion of the First Canto as gave him confidence to renew his negotiation with Constable for the sale of the whole, or part of its copyright. It was, moreover, at this period, that, looking into an old cabinet in search of some fishing-tackle, his eye chanced to light once more on the Ashestiel fragment of *Waverley.*—He read over those introductory chapters—thought they had been undervalued—and determined to finish the story.

All this while, too, he had been subjected to those interruptions from idle strangers, which, from the first to the last, imposed so heavy a tax on his celebrity: and he no doubt received such guests with all his usual urbanity of attention. Yet I was not surprised to discover, among his hasty notes to the Ballantynes, several of tenour akin to the following specimens:—

"Sept. 23, 1813.

"My temper is really worn to a hair's-breadth. The intruder of yesterday hung on me till twelve to-day. When I had just taken my pen, he was relieved, like a sentry leaving guard, by two other lounging visiters; and their post has now been supplied by some people on real business."

Again—

"Monday Evening.

"Oh James—oh James—Two Irish dames
Oppress me very sore;
I groaning send one sheet I've penned—
For hang them! there's no more."

A scrap of nearly the same date to his brother Thomas may be introduced, as belonging to the same state of feeling—

"Dear Tom, I observe what you say as to Mr. * * * *; and as you may often be exposed to similar requests, which it would be difficult to parry, you can sign such letters of introduction as relate to persons whom you do not delight to honour short. *T. Scott*: by which abridgement of your name I shall understand to limit my civilities."

It is proper to mention, that, in the very agony of these perplexities, the unfortunate Maturin received from him a timely succour of £50, rendered doubly acceptable by the kind and judicious letter of advice in which it was enclosed; and I have before me ample evidence that his benevolence had been extended to other struggling brothers of the trade, even when he must often have had actual difficulty to meet the immediate expenditure of his own family. All this, however, will not surprise the reader.

Nor did his general correspondence suffer much interruption; and, as some relief after so many painful details, I shall close the narrative of this anxious year by a few specimens of his miscellaneous communications.

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Abbotsford, Sept. 12, 1813.

"My dear Miss Baillie,

"I have been a vile lazy correspondent, having been strolling about the country, and indeed a little way into England, for the greater part of July and August; in short, 'aye skipping here and there,' like the Tanner of Tamworth's horse. Since I returned, I have had a gracious offer of the laurel on the part of the Prince Regent. You will not wonder that I have declined it, though with every expression of gratitude which such an unexpected compliment demanded. Indeed, it would be high imprudence in one having literary reputation to maintain, to accept of an offer which obliged him to produce a poetical exercise on a given theme twice a-year; and besides, as my loyalty to the royal family is very sincere, I would not wish to have it thought mercenary. The public has done its part by me very well, and so has Government: and I thought this little literary provision ought to be bestowed on one who has made literature his sole profession. If the Regent means to make it respectable, he will abolish the foolish custom of the annual odes, which is a drudgery no person of talent could ever willingly encounter—or come clear off from, if he was so rash. And so, peace be with the laurel

'Profaned by Cibber, and contemned by Gray.'

"I was for a fortnight at Drumlanrig, a grand old chateau which has descended, by the death of the late Duke of Queensberry, to the Duke of Buccleuch. It is really a most magnificent pile, and when embosomed amid the wide forest scenery, of which I have an infantile recollection, must have been very romantic. But old Q. made wild devastation among the noble trees, although some fine ones are still left, and a quantity of young shoots are, in despite of the want of every kind of attention, rushing up to supply the place of the fathers of the forest from whose stems they are springing. It will now I trust be in better hands, for the reparation of the castle goes hand in hand with the rebuilding of all the cottages, in which an aged race of pensioners of Duke Charles, and his pious wife,—'Kitty, blooming, young and gay,'—have, during the last reign, been pining into rheumatisms and agues, in neglected poverty.

"All this is beautiful to witness; the indoor work does not please me so well, though I am aware that, to those who are to inhabit an old castle, it becomes often a matter of necessity to make alterations by which its tone and character are changed for the worse. Thus a noble gallery, which ran the whole length of the front, is converted into bed-rooms—very comfortable, indeed, but not quite so magnificent; and as grim a dungeon as ever knave or honest man was confined in, is in some danger of being humbled into a wine-cellar. It is almost impossible to draw your breath, when you recollect that this, so many feet under ground, and totally bereft of air and light, was built for the imprisonment of human beings, whether guilty, suspected, or merely unfortunate. Certainly, if our frames are not so hardy, our hearts are softer than those of our forefathers, although probably a few years of domestic war, or feudal oppression, would bring us back to the same case-hardening both in body and sentiment.

"I meant to have gone to Rokeby, but was prevented by Mrs. Morritt being unwell, which I very much regret, as I know few people that deserve better health. I am very glad you have known them, and I pray you to keep up the acquaintance in winter. I am glad to see by this day's paper that our friend Terry has made a favourable impression on his first appearance at Covent Garden—he has got a very good engagement there for three years, at twelve guineas a-week, which is a handsome income. This little place comes on as fast as can be reasonably hoped; and the pinasters are all above the ground, but cannot be planted out for twelve months. My kindest compliments—in which Mrs. Scott always joins—attend Miss Agnes, the Doctor, and his family. Ever, my dear friend, yours most faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.

"Abbotsford, 20th October, 1813.

"Dear Terry,

"You will easily believe that I was greatly pleased to hear from you. I had already learned from The Courier (what I had anticipated too strongly to doubt for one instant) your favourable impression on the London public. I think nothing can be more judicious in the managers than to exercise the various powers you possess, in their various extents. A man of genius is apt to be limited to one single style, and to become perforce a mannerist, merely because the public is not so just to its own amusement as to give him an opportunity of throwing himself into different lines; and doubtless the exercise of our talents in one unvaried course, by degrees renders them incapable of any other, as the over use of any one limb of our body gradually impoverishes the rest. I shall be anxious to hear that you have played *Malvolio*, which is, I think, one of your *coups-de-maître*, and in which envy itself cannot affect to trace an imitation. That same charge of imitation, by the way, is one of the surest scents upon which dunces are certain to open. Undoubtedly, if the same character is well performed by two individuals, their acting must bear a general resemblance—it could not be well performed by both were it otherwise. But this general resemblance, which arises from both following nature and their author, can as little be termed imitation as the river in Wales can be identified with that of Macedon. Never mind these dunderheads, but go on your own way, and scorn to laugh on the right side of your mouth, to make a difference from some ancient comedian who, in the same part, always laughed on the left. Stick to the public—be uniform in your exertions to study even those characters which have little in them, and to give a grace which you cannot find in the author. Audiences are always grateful for this—or rather—for gratitude is as much out of the question in the Theatre, as Bernadotte says to Boney it is amongst sovereigns—or rather, the audience is gratified by receiving pleasure from a part which they had no expectation would afford them any. It is in this view that, had I been of your profession, and possessed talents, I think I should have liked often those parts with which my brethren quarrelled, and studied to give them an effect which their intrinsic merit did not entitle them to. I have some thoughts of being in town in spring (not resolutions, by any means); and it will be an additional motive to witness your success, and to find you as comfortably established as your friends in Castle Street earnestly hope and trust you will be.

"The summer—an uncommon summer in beauty and serenity—has glided away from us at Abbotsford, amidst our usual petty cares and petty pleasures. The children's garden is in apple-pie order, our own completely cropped and stocked, and all the trees flourishing like the green bay of the Psalmist. I have been so busy about our domestic arrangements, that I have not killed six hares this season. Besides, I have got a cargo of old armour sufficient to excite a suspicion that I intend to mount a squadron of cuirassiers. I only want a place for my armoury; and, thank God, I can wait for that, these being no times for building. And this brings me to the loss of poor Stark, with whom more genius has died than is left behind among the collected universality of Scottish architects. O, Lord!—but what does it signify?—Earth was born to bear, and man to pay (that is, lords, nabobs, Glasgow traders, and those who have wherewithal)—so wherefore grumble at great castles and cottages, with which the taste of the latter contrives to load the back of Mother Terra?—I have no hobby-horsical commissions at present, unless if you meet the Voyages of Captain Richard, or Robert Falconer, in one volume—'cow-heel, quoth Sancho'—I mark them for my own. Mrs. Scott, Sophia, Anne, and the boys, unite in kind remembrances. Ever yours truly,

W. Scott."

To the Right Hon. Lord Byron, 4, Bennet Street, St. James's, London.

"Abbotsford, 6th Nov. 1813.

"My dear Lord,

"I was honoured with your Lordship's letter of the 27th September,[*] and have sincerely to regret that there is such a prospect of your leaving Britain, without my achieving your personal acquaintance. I heartily wish your Lordship had come down to Scotland this season, for I have never seen a finer, and you might have renewed all your old associations with Caledonia, and made such new ones as were likely to suit you. I dare promise you would have liked me well enough—for I have many properties of a Turk—never trouble myself about futurity—am as lazy as the day is long—delight in collecting silver-mounted pistols and ataghans, and go out of my own road for no one—all which I take to be attributes of your good Moslem. Moreover, I am somewhat an admirer of royalty, and in order to maintain this part of my creed, I shall take care never to be connected with a court, but stick to the *ignotum pro mirabili*.

"The author of the Queen's Wake will be delighted with your approbation. He is a wonderful creature for his opportunities, which were far inferior to those of the generality of Scottish peasants. Burns, for instance—(not that their extent of talents is to be compared for an instant)—had an education not much worse than the sons of many gentlemen in Scotland. But poor Hogg literally could neither read nor write till a very late period of his life; and when he first distinguished himself by his poetical talent, could neither spell nor write grammar. When I first knew him he used to send me his poetry, and was both indignant and horrified when I pointed out to him parallel passages in authors whom he had never read, but whom all the world would have sworn he had copied. An evil fate has hitherto attended him, and baffled every attempt that has been made to place him in a road to independence. But I trust he may be more fortunate in future.

"I have not yet seen Southey in the Gazette as Laureate. He is a real poet, such as we read of in former times, with every atom of his soul and every moment of his time dedicated to literary pursuits, in which he differs from almost all those who have divided public attention with him. Your Lordship's habits of society, for example, and my own professional and official avocations, must necessarily connect us much more with our respective classes in the usual routine of pleasure or business, than if we had not any other employment than *vacare musis*. But Southey's ideas are all poetical, and his whole soul dedicated to the pursuit of literature. In this respect, as well as in many others, he is a most striking and interesting character.

"I am very much interested in all that concerns your Giaour, which is universally approved of among our mountains. I have heard no objection except by one or two geniuses, who run over poetry as a cat does over a harpsichord, and they affect to complain of obscurity. On the contrary, I hold every real lover of the art is obliged to you for condensing the narrative, by giving us only those striking scenes which you have shown to be so susceptible of poetic ornament, and leaving to imagination the says I's and says he's, and all the minutiæ of detail which might be proper in giving evidence before a court of justice. The truth is, I think poetry is most striking when the mirror can be held up to the reader, and the same kept constantly before his eyes; it requires most uncommon powers to support a direct and downright narration; nor can I remember many instances of its being successfully maintained even by our greatest bards.

"As to those who have done me the honour to take my rhapsodies for their model, I can only say they have exemplified the ancient adage, 'one fool makes many;' nor do I think I have yet had much reason to suppose I have given rise to any thing of distinguished merit. The worst is, it draws on me letters and commendatory verses, to which my sad and sober thanks in humble prose are deemed a most unmeet and ungracious reply. Of this sort of plague your Lordship must ere now have had more than your share, but I think you can hardly have met with so original a request as concluded the letter of a bard I this morning received, who limited his demands to being placed in his due station on Parnassus—*and* invested with a post in the Edinburgh Custom House.

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[*] The letter in question has not been preserved in Scott's collection of correspondence. This leaves some allusions in the answer obscure.

"What an awakening of dry bones seems to be taking place on the Continent! I could as soon have believed in the resurrection of the Romans as in that of the Prussians—yet it seems a real and active renovation of national spirit. It will certainly be strange enough if that tremendous pitcher, which has travelled to so many fountains, should be at length broken on the banks of the Saale; but from the highest to the lowest we are the fools of fortune. Your Lordship will probably recollect where the Oriental tale occurs, of a Sultan who consulted Solomon on the proper inscription for a signet-ring, requiring that the maxim which it conveyed should be at once proper for moderating the presumption of prosperity and tempering the pressure of adversity. The apophthegm supplied by the Jewish sage was, I think, admirably adapted for both purposes, being comprehended in the words 'And this also shall pass away.'

"When your Lordship sees Rogers, will you remember me kindly to him? I hope to be in London next spring, and renew my acquaintance with my friends there. It will be an additional motive if I could flatter myself that your Lordship's stay in the country will permit me the pleasure of waiting upon you. I am, with much respect and regard, your Lordship's truly honoured and obliged humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

"I go to Edinburgh next week, *multum gemens.*"

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"Edinburgh, 10th Dec. 1813.

"Many thanks, my dear friend, for your kind token of remembrance, which I yesterday received. I ought to blush, if I had grace enough left, at my long and ungenerous silence: but what shall I say? The habit of procrastination, which had always more or less a dominion over me, does not relax its sway as I grow older and less willing to take up the pen. I have not written to dear Ellis this age,—yet there is not a day that I do not think of you and him, and one or two other friends in your southern land. I am very glad the whisky came safe: do not stint so laudable an admiration for the liquor of Caledonia, for I have plenty of right good and sound Highland Ferintosh, and I can always find an opportunity of sending you up a bottle.

"We are here almost mad with the redemption of Holland, which has an instant and gratifying effect on the trade of Leith, and indeed all along the east coast of Scotland. About £100,000 worth of various commodities, which had been dormant in cellars and ware-houses, was sold the first day the news arrived, and Orange ribbons and *Orange Boven* was the order of the day among all ranks. It is a most miraculous revivification which it has been our fate to witness. Though of a tolerably sanguine temper, I had fairly adjourned all hopes and expectations of the kind till another generation; the same power, however, that opened the windows of heaven and the fountains of the great deep, has been pleased to close them, and to cause his wind to blow upon the face of the waters, so that we may look out from the ark of our preservation and behold the reappearance of the mountain crests, and old, beloved, and well-known landmarks, which we had deemed swallowed up for ever in the abyss: the dove with the olive branch would complete the simile, but of that I see little hope. Buonaparte is that desperate gambler, who will not rise while he has a stake left; and, indeed, to be King of France would be a poor pettifogging enterprise, after having been almost Emperor of the World. I think he will drive things on, till the fickle and impatient people over whom he rules get tired of him and shake him out of the saddle. Some circumstances seem to intimate his having become jealous of the Senate; and indeed any thing like a representative body, however imperfectly constructed, becomes dangerous to a tottering tyranny. The sword displayed on both frontiers may, like that brandished across the road of Balaam, terrify even dumb and irrational subjection into utterance: but enough of politics, though now a more cheerful subject than they have been for many years past.

"I have had a strong temptation to go to the Continent this Christmas; and should certainly have done so, had I been sure of getting from Amsterdam to Frankfort, where, as I know Lord Aberdeen and Lord Cathcart, I might expect a welcome. But notwithstanding my earnest desire to see the allied armies cross the Rhine, which I suppose must be one of the grandest military spectacles in the world, I should like to know that the roads were tolerably secure, and the means of getting forward attainable. In Spring, however, if no unfortunate change takes place, I trust to visit the camp of the allies, and see all the pomp and power and circumstance of war, which I have so often imagined, and sometimes attempted to embody in verse. Johnnie Richardson is a good, honourable, kind-hearted little fellow as lives in the world, with a pretty taste for poetry, which he has wisely kept under subjection to the occupation of drawing briefs and revising conveyances. It is a great good fortune to him to be in your neighbourhood, as he is an idolater of genius, and where could he offer up his worship so justly? And I am sure you will like him, for he is really 'officious, innocent, sincere.'* Terry, I hope, will get on well; he is industrious, and zealous for the honour of his art. Ventidius must have been an excellent part for him, hovering between tragedy and comedy, which is precisely what will suit him. We have a woful want of him here, both in public and private, for he was one of the most easy and quiet chimney-corner companions that I have had for these two or three years past.

"I am very glad if any thing I have written to you could give pleasure to Miss Edgeworth, though I am sure it will fall very far short of the respect which I have for her brilliant talents. I always write to you *à la volée*, and trust implicitly to your kindness and judgment upon all occasions where you may choose to communicate any part of my letters.† As to the taxing men, I must battle them as I can: they are worse than the great Emathian conqueror, who

'bade spare
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
Went to the ground.'

Your pinasters are coming up gallantly in the nursery-bed at Abbotsford. I trust to pay the whole establishment a Christmas visit, which will be, as Robinson Crusoe says of his glass of rum, 'to mine exceeding refreshment.' All Edinburgh have been on tiptoe to see Madame de Staël, but she is now not likely to honour us with a visit, at which I cannot prevail on myself to be very sorry; for as I tired of some of her works, I am afraid I should disgrace my taste by tiring of the authoress too. All my little people are very well, learning, with great pain and diligence, much which they will have forgotten altogether, or nearly so, in the course of twelve years hence; but the habit of learning is something in itself, even when the lessons are forgotten.

"I must not omit to tell you that a friend of mine, with whom that metal is more plenty than with me, has given me some gold mohurs to be converted into a ring for enchasing King Charles' hair; but this is not to be done until I get to London, and get a very handsome pattern. Ever, most truly and sincerely, yours,

W. SCOTT."

The last sentence of this letter refers to a lock of the hair of Charles I., which, at Dr. Baillie's request, Sir Henry Halford had transmitted to Scott when the royal martyr's remains were discovered at Windsor, in April, 1813. Sir John Malcolm had given him some Indian coins to supply virgin gold for the setting of this relic; and for some years he constantly wore the ring, which is a massive and beautiful one, with the word REMEMBER surrounding it in highly relieved black-letter.

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* Scott's old friend, Mr. John Richardson, had shortly before this time taken a house in Miss Baillie's neighbourhood, on Hampstead Heath.

† Miss Baillie had apologized to him for having sent an extract of one of his letters to her friend at Edgeworthstown.

The poet's allusion to "taxing men" may require another word of explanation. To add to his troubles during this autumn of 1813, a demand was made on him by the commissioners of the income-tax, to return in one of their schedules an account of the profits of his literary exertions during the three last years. He demurred to this, and took the opinion of high authorities in Scotland, who confirmed him in his impression that the claim was beyond the statute. The grounds of his resistance are thus briefly stated in one of his letters to his legal friend in London.

To John Richardson, Esq., Fludyer Street, Westminster.

"My dear Richardson,

"I have owed you a letter this long time, but perhaps my debt might not yet be discharged, had I not a little matter of business to trouble you with. I wish you to lay before either the King's counsel or Sir Samuel Romilly and any other you may approve, the point, Whether a copyright, being sold for the term during which Queen Anne's act warranted the property to the author, the price is liable in payment of the property tax. I contend it is not so liable, for the following reasons:—1st, It is a patent right, expected to produce an annual, or at least an incidental profit, during the currency of many years; and surely it was never contended that if a man sold a theatrical patent, or a patent for machinery, property tax should be levied in the first place on the full price as paid to the seller, and then on the profits as purchased by the buyer. I am not very expert at figures, but I think it clear that a double taxation takes place. 2d, It should be considered that a book may be the work not of one year, but of a man's whole life; and as it has been found, in a late case of the Duke of Gordon, that a fall of timber was not subject to property tax because it comprehended the produce of thirty years, it seems at least equally fair that mental exertions should not be subjected to a harder principle of measurement. 3d, The demand is, so far as I can learn, totally new and unheard of. 4th, Supposing that I died and left my manuscripts to be sold publicly along with the rest of my library, is there any ground for taxing what might be received for the written book, any more than any rare printed book which a speculative bookseller might purchase with a view to re-publication? You will know whether any of these things ought to be suggested in the brief. David Hume, and every lawyer here whom I have spoken to, consider the demand as illegal. Believe me truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Mr. Richardson having prepared a case, obtained upon it the opinions of Mr. Alexander (afterwards Sir William Alexander and Chief Baron of the Exchequer), and of the late Sir Samuel Romilly. These eminent lawyers agreed in the view of their Scotch brethren; and, after a tedious correspondence, the Lords of the Treasury at last decided that the Income-Tax Commissioners should abandon their claim upon the produce of literary labour. I have thought it worth while to preserve some record of this decision, and of the authorities on which it rested, in case such a demand should ever be renewed hereafter.

In the beginning of December, the Town-Council of Edinburgh resolved to send a deputation to congratulate the Prince Regent on the prosperous course of public events, and they invited Scott to draw up their address, which, on its being transmitted for previous inspection to Mr. William Dundas, then member for the city, and through him shown privately to the Regent, was acknowledged to the penman, by his Royal Highness's command, as "the most elegant congratulation a sovereign ever received, or a subject offered."[*] The Lord Provost of Edinburgh presented it accordingly at the levee of the 10th, and it was received most graciously. On returning to the north, the Magistrates expressed their sense of Scott's services on this occasion, by presenting him with the freedom of his native city, and also with a piece of plate,—which the reader will find alluded to, among other matters of more consequence, in a letter to be quoted presently.

At this time Scott further expressed his patriotic exultation in the rescue of Europe, by two songs for the anniversary of the death of Pitt; one of which has ever since, I believe, been chaunted at that celebration;—

> "O dread was the time and more dreadful the omen,
> When the brave on Marengo lay slaughter'd in vain."[†]

CHAPTER XXVII.

INSANITY OF HENRY WEBER—LETTERS ON THE ABDICATION OF NAPOLEON, &c.—PUBLICATION OF SCOTT'S LIFE AND EDITION OF SWIFT—ESSAYS FOR THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA—COMPLETION AND PUBLICATION OF WAVERLEY.—1814.

I HAVE to open the year 1814 with a melancholy story. Mention has been made, more than once, of Henry Weber, a poor German scholar, who, escaping to this country, in 1804, from misfortunes in his own, excited Scott's compassion, and was thenceforth furnished, through his means, with literary employment of various sorts. Weber was a man of considerable learning; but Scott, as was his custom, appears to have formed an exaggerated notion of his capacity, and certainly countenanced him, to his own severe cost, in several most unfortunate undertakings. When not engaged on things of a more ambitious character, he had acted for ten years as his protector's amanuensis, and when the family were in Edinburgh, he very often dined with them. There was something very interesting in his appearance and manners; he had a fair, open countenance, in which the honesty and the enthusiasm of his nation were alike visible; his demeanour was gentle and modest; and he had not only a stock of curious antiquarian knowledge, but the reminiscences, which he detailed with amusing simplicity, of an early life chequered with many strange enough adventures. He was, in short, much a favourite with Scott and all the household; and was invited to dine with them so frequently, chiefly because his friend was aware that he had an unhappy propensity to drinking, and was anxious to keep him away from places where he might have been more likely to indulge it. This vice, however, had been growing upon him; and of late Scott had found it necessary to make some rather severe remonstrances about habits which were at once injuring his health, and interrupting his literary industry.

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[*] Letter from the Right Hon. W. Dundas, dated 6th December, 1813.

[†] See Scott's Poetical Works, vol. xi. p. 309. Edition, 1834.

They had, however, parted kindly when Scott left Edinburgh at Christmas 1813,—and the day after his return Weber attended him as usual in his library, being employed in transcribing extracts during several hours, while his friend, seated over against him, continued working at the Life of Swift. The light beginning to fail, Scott threw himself back in his chair, and was about to ring for candles, when he observed the German's eyes fixed upon him with an unusual solemnity of expression. "Weber," said he, "what's the matter with you?" "Mr. Scott," said Weber rising, "you have long insulted me, and I can bear it no longer. I have brought a pair of pistols with me, and must insist on your taking one of them instantly;" and with that he produced the weapons, which had been deposited under his chair, and laid one of them on Scott's manuscript. "You are mistaken, I think," said Scott, "in your way of setting about this affair—but no matter. It can, however, be no part of your object to annoy Mrs. Scott and the children; therefore, if you please, we will put the pistols into the drawer till after dinner, and then arrange to go out together like gentlemen." Weber answered with equal coolness, "I believe that will be better," and laid the second pistol also on the table. Scott locked them both in his desk, and said, "I am glad you have felt the propriety of what I suggested—let me only request further that nothing may occur while we are at dinner to give my wife any suspicion of what has been passing." Weber again assented, and Scott withdrew to his dressing-room, from which he immediately dispatched a message to one of Weber's intimate companions,—and then dinner was served, and Weber joined the family circle as usual. He conducted himself with perfect composure, and every thing seemed to go on in the ordinary way, until whisky and hot water being produced, Scott, instead of inviting his guest to help himself, mixed two moderate tumblers of toddy, and handed one of them to Weber, who, upon that, started up with a furious countenance, but instantly sat down again, and when Mrs. Scott expressed her fear that he was ill, answered placidly that he was liable to spasms, but that the pain was gone. He then took the glass, eagerly gulped down its contents, and pushed it back to Scott. At this moment the friend who had been sent for made his appearance, and Weber, on seeing him enter the room, rushed past him and out of the house, without stopping to put on his hat. The friend, who pursued instantly, came up with him at the end of the street, and did all he could to soothe his agitation, but in vain. The same evening he was obliged to be put into a strait waistcoat; and though, in a few days, he exhibited such symptoms of recovery that he was allowed to go by himself to pay a visit in the North of England, he there soon relapsed, and continued ever afterwards a hopeless lunatic, being supported to the end of his life in June, 1818, at Scott's expense, in an asylum at York.

The reader will now appreciate the gentle delicacy of the following letter:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. Rokeby, Greta Bridge.

"Edinburgh, 7th January, 1814.

"My dear Morritt,

"Many happy New-years to you and Mrs. Morritt.

"I have postponed writing a long while, in hopes to send you the Life of Swift. But I have been delayed by an odd accident. Poor Weber, whom you may have heard me mention as a sort of grinder of mine, who assisted me in various ways, has fallen into a melancholy state. His habits, like those of most German students, were always too convivial—this, of course, I guarded against while he was in my house, which was always once a week at least; but unfortunately he undertook a long walk through the Highlands of upwards of 2000 miles, and, I suppose, took potations pottle deep to support him through the fatigue. His mind became accordingly quite unsettled, and after some strange behaviour here, he was fortunately prevailed upon to go to * * * * who resides in Yorkshire. It is not unlikely, from something that dropped from him, that he may take it into his head to call at Rokeby, in which case you must parry any visit, upon the score of Mrs. Morritt's health. If he were what he used to be, you would be much pleased with him; for besides a very extensive general acquaintance with literature, he was particularly deep in our old dramatic lore, a good modern linguist, a tolerable draughtsman and antiquary, and a most excellent hydrographer. I have not the least doubt that if he submits to the proper regimen of abstinence and moderate exercise, he will be quite well in a few weeks or days—if not, it is miserable to think what may happen. The being suddenly deprived of his services in this melancholy way, has flung me back at least a month with Swift, and left me no time to write to my friends, for all my memoranda, &c. were in his hands, and had to be new-modelled, &c. &c.

"Our glorious prospects on the Continent called forth the congratulations of the City of Edinburgh among others. The Magistrates asked me to draw their address, which was presented by the Lord Provost in person, who happens to be a gentleman of birth and fortune.[*] The Prince said some very handsome things respecting the address, with which the Magistrates were so much elated, that they have done the genteel thing (as Winifred Jenkins says) by their literary adviser, and presented me with the freedom of the city, and a handsome piece of plate. I got the freedom at the same time with Lord Dalhousie and Sir Thomas Graham, and the Provost gave a very brilliant entertainment. About 150 gentlemen dined at his own house, all as well served as if there had been a dozen. So if one strikes a cuff on the one side from ill-will, there is a pat on the other from kindness, and the shuttlecock is kept flying. To poor Charlotte's great horror, I chose my plate in the form of an old English tankard, an utensil for which I have a particular respect, especially when charged with good ale, cup, or any of those potables. I hope you will soon see mine.[†]

"Your little friends, Sophia and Walter, were at a magnificent party on Twelfth Night at Dalkeith, where the Duke and Duchess entertained all Edinburgh. I think they have dreamed of nothing since but Aladdin's lamp and the palace of Haroun Alraschid. I am uncertain what to do this spring. I would fain go on the

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[*] The late Sir John Marjoribanks of Lees, Bart.

[†] The inscription for this tankard was penned by the late celebrated Dr. James Gregory, Professor of the Practice of Physic in the University of Edinburgh; and I therefore transcribe it.

GUALTERUM SCOTT
DE ABBOTSFORD
VIRUM SUMMI INGENII
SCRIPTOREM ELEGANTEM
POETARUM SUI SECULI FACILE PRINCIPEM
PATRIÆ DECUS
OB VARIA ERGA IPSAM MERITA
IN CIVIUM SUORUM NUMERUM
GRATA ADSCRIPSIT CIVITAS EDINBURGENSIS
ET HOC CANTHARO DONAVIT
A. D. M.DCCC.XIII.

Continent for three or four weeks, if it be then safe for non-combatants. If not, we will have a merry meeting in London, and, like Master Silence,

'Eat, drink, and make good cheer,
And thank heaven for the merry year.'

I have much to say about Triermain. The fourth edition is at press. The Empress-Dowager of Russia has expressed such an interest in it that it will be inscribed to her, in some doggerel sonnet or other, by the unknown author. This is funny enough. Love a thousand times to dear Mrs. Morritt, who, I trust keeps pretty well. Pray write soon—a modest request from

WALTER SCOTT."

The last of Weber's literary productions were the analyses of the old German Poems of the *Helden Buch*, and the *Nibelungen Lied*, which appeared in a massive quarto, entitled Illustrations of Northern Antiquities, published in the summer of 1814, by his and Scott's friend, Mr. Robert Jameson. Scott avowedly contributed to this collection an account of the Eyrbiggia Saga, which has since been included in his Prose Miscellanies (Vol. V., edition 1834); but any one who examines the share of the work which goes under Weber's name, will see that Scott had a considerable hand in that also. The rhymed versions from the Nibelungen Lied came, I can have no doubt, from his pen; but he never reclaimed these, or any other similar benefactions, of which I have traced not a few; nor, highly curious and even beautiful as many of them are, could they be intelligible, if separated from the prose narrative on which Weber embroidered them, in imitation of the style of Ellis's Specimens of Metrical Romance.

The following letters, on the first abdication of Napoleon, are too characteristic to be omitted here. I need not remind the reader how greatly Scott had calmed his opinions, and softened his feelings respecting the career and fate of the most extraordinary man of our age, before he undertook to write his history.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Portland Place, London.

"Abbotsford, 30th April, 1814.

"'Joy—joy in London now!'—and in Edinburgh, moreover, my dear Morritt; for never did you or I see, and never again shall we see, according to all human prospects, a consummation so truly glorious, as now bids fair to conclude this long and eventful war. It is startling to think that, but for the preternatural presumption and hardness of heart displayed by the arch-enemy of mankind, we should have had a hollow and ominous truce with him, instead of a glorious and stable peace with the country over which he tyrannized, and its lawful ruler. But Providence had its own wise purposes to answer—and such was the deference of France to the ruling power—so devoutly did they worship the Devil for possession of his burning throne, that, it may be, nothing short of his rejection of every fair and advantageous offer of peace could have driven them to those acts of resistance which remembrance of former convulsions had rendered so fearful to them. Thank God! it is done at last: and—although I rather grudge him even the mouthful of air which he may draw in the Isle of Elba—yet I question whether the moral lesson would have been completed either by his perishing in battle, or being torn to pieces (which I should greatly have preferred), like the De Witts, by an infuriated crowd of conscripts and their parents. Good God! with what strange feelings must that man retire from the most unbounded authority ever vested in the hands of one man, to the seclusion of privacy and restraint. We have never heard of one good action which he did, at least for which there was not some selfish or political reason; and the train of slaughter, pestilence, and famine and fire, which his ambition has occasioned, would have outweighed five hundredfold the private virtues of a Titus.

These are comfortable reflections to carry with one to privacy. If he writes his own history, as he proposes, we may gain something; but he must send it here to be printed. Nothing less than a neck-or-nothing London bookseller, like John Dunton of yore, will venture to commit to the press his strange details uncastrated. I doubt that he has *stamina* to undertake such a labour; and yet in youth, as I know from the brothers of Lauriston, who were his school companions, Buonaparte's habits were distinctly and strongly literary. Spain, the Continental System, and the invasion of Russia, he may record as his three leading blunders—an awful lesson to sovereigns that morality is not so indifferent to politics as Machiavelians will assert. *Res nolunt diu male administrari.* Why can we not meet to talk over these matters over a glass of claret; and when shall that be? Not this spring, I fear, for time wears fast away, and I have remained here nailed among my future oaks, which I measure daily with a foot-rule. Those which were planted two years ago, begin to look very gaily, and a venerable plantation of four years old looks as *bobbish* as yours at the dairy by Greta side. Besides, I am arranging this cottage a little more conveniently, to put off the plague and expense of building another year; and I assure you, I expect to spare Mrs. Morritt and you a chamber in the wall, with a dressing-room, and every thing handsome about you. You will not stipulate, of course, for many square feet. You would be surprised to hear how the Continent is awakening from its iron sleep. The utmost eagerness seems to prevail about English literature. I have had several voluntary epistles from different parts of Germany, from men of letters, who are eager to know what we have been doing, while they were compelled to play at blindman's buff with the *ci-devant Empereur*. The feeling of the French officers, of whom we have many in our vicinity, is very curious, and yet natural.* Many of them, companions of Buonaparte's victories, and who hitherto have marched with him from conquest to conquest, disbelieve the change entirely. This is all very stupid to write to you, who are in the centre of these wonders; but what else can I say unless I should send you the measure of the future fathers of the forest? Mrs. Scott is with me here—the children in Edinburgh. Our kindest love attends Mrs. Morritt. I hope to hear soon that her health continues to gain ground.

"I have a letter from Southey, in high spirits on the glorious news. What a pity this last battle† was fought. But I am glad the rascals were beaten once more. Ever yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick.

"Edinburgh, 17th June, 1814.

"My dear Southey,

"I suspended writing to thank you for the Carmen Triumphale—(a happy omen of what you can do to immortalize our public story)—until the feverish mood of expectation and anxiety should be over. And then, as you truly say, there followed a stunning sort of listless astonishment and complication of feeling, which if it did not lessen enjoyment, confused and confounded one's sense of it. I remember the first time I happened to see a launch, I was neither so much struck with the descent of the vessel, nor with its majestic sweep to its moorings, as with the blank which was suddenly made from the withdrawing so large an object, and the prospect which was at once opened to the opposite side of the dock crowded with spectators. Buonaparte's fall strikes me something in the same way; the huge bulk of his power, against which a thousand arms were hammering, was obviously to sink when its main props were struck away—and yet now—when it has disappeared—the vacancy which it leaves in our minds and attention, marks its huge and preponderating importance more strongly than even its presence. Yet I so devoutly expected the termination, that in discussing the matter with Major Philips, who seemed to partake of the doubts which prevailed during the feverish period preceding the capture of Paris, when he was expressing his apprehensions that the capital of France would be defended to the last, I hazarded a prophecy that a battle would be fought on the heights of Mont Martre—(no great sagacity; since it was the point where Marlborough proposed to attack, and for which Saxe projected a scheme of defence)—and that if the allies were successful, which I little doubted, the city would surrender, and the Senate proclaim the dethronement of Buonaparte. But I never thought nor imagined that he would have *given in* as he has done. I always considered him as possessing the genius and talents of an Eastern conqueror; and although I never supposed that he possessed, allowing for some difference of education, the liberality of conduct and political views which were sometimes exhibited by old Hyder Ally, yet I did think he might have shown the same resolved and dogged spirit of resolution which induced Tippoo Saib to die manfully upon the breach of his capital city with his sabre clenched in his hand. But this is a poor devil, and cannot play the tyrant so rarely as Bottom the Weaver proposed to do. I think it is Strap in Roderick Random, who seeing a highwayman that had lately robbed him, disarmed and bound, fairly offers to box him for a shilling. One has really the same feeling with respect to Buonaparte, though if he go out of life after all in the usual manner, it will be the strongest proof of his own insignificance, and the liberality of the age we live in. Were I a son of Palm or Hoffer, I should be tempted to take a long shot at him in his retreat to Elba. As for coaxing the French by restoring all our conquests, it would be driving generosity into extravagance; most of them have been colonized with British subjects, and improved by British capital, and surely we owe no more to the French nation than any well-meaning individual might owe to a madman, whom—at the expense of a hard struggle, black eyes, and bruises—he has at length overpowered, knocked down, and by the wholesome discipline of a bull's pizzle and strait-jacket, brought to the handsome enjoyment of his senses. I think with you, what we return to them should be well paid for; and they should have no Pondicherry to be a nest of smugglers, nor Mauritius to nurse a hornet-swarm of privateers. In short, draw teeth, and pare claws, and leave them to fatten themselves in peace and quiet, when they are deprived of the means of indulging their restless spirit of enterprise.

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* A good many French officers, prisoners of war, had been living on *parole* in Melrose, and the adjoining villages; and Mr. and Mrs. Scott had been particularly kind and hospitable to them.

† The battle of Thoulouse.

"——The above was written at Abbotsford last month, but left in my portfolio there till my return some days ago; and now, when I look over what I have written, I am confirmed in my opinion that we have given the rascals too good an opportunity to boast that they have got well off. An intimate friend of mine,* just returned from a long captivity in France, witnessed the entry of the King, guarded by the Imperial Guards, whose countenances betokened the most sullen and ferocious discontent. The mob, and especially the women, pelted them for refusing to cry 'Vive le Roi.' If Louis is well advised, he will get rid of these fellows gradually, but as soon as possible. 'Joy, joy in London now!' What a scene has been going on there; I think you may see the Czar appear on the top of one of your stages one morning. He is a fine fellow, and has fought the good fight. Yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

On the 1st of July 1814, Scott's Life and Edition of Swift, in nineteen volumes 8vo, at length issued from the press. This adventure, undertaken by Constable in 1808, had been proceeded in during all the variety of their personal relations, and now came forth when author and publisher felt more warmly towards each other than perhaps they had ever before done. The impression was of 1250 copies: and a reprint of similar extent was called for in 1824. The Life of Swift has subsequently been included in the author's Miscellanies, and has obtained a very wide circulation.

By his industrious inquiries, in which, as the preface gratefully acknowledges, he found many zealous assistants, especially among the

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* Sir Adam Ferguson, who had been taken prisoner in the course of the Duke of Wellington's retreat from Burgos.

Irish literati,* Scott added to this edition many admirable pieces, both in prose and verse, which had never before been printed, and still more which had escaped notice amidst old bundles of pamphlets and broadsides. To the illustration of these and of all the better known writings of the Dean, he brought the same qualifications which had, by general consent, distinguished his Dryden, "uniting," as the Edinburgh Review expresses it, "to the minute knowledge and patient research of the Malones and Chalmerses, a vigour of judgment, and a vivacity of style, to which they had no pretensions." His biographical narrative, introductory essays, and notes on Swift, show, indeed, an intimacy of acquaintance with the obscurest details of the political, social, and literary history of the period of Queen Anne, which it is impossible to consider without feeling a lively regret that he never accomplished a long cherished purpose of preparing a Life and Edition of Pope on a similar scale. It has been specially unfortunate for that "true deacon of the craft," as Scott called Pope, that first Goldsmith, and then Scott, should have taken up, only to abandon it, the project of writing his life and editing his works.

The Edinburgh Reviewer thus characterises Scott's Memoir of the Dean of St. Patrick's:—

> "It is not everywhere extremely well written, in a literary point of view; but it is drawn up in substance with great intelligence, liberality, and good feeling. It is quite fair and moderate in politics; and perhaps rather too indulgent and tender towards individuals of all descriptions—more full, at least, of kindness and veneration for genius and social virtue, than of indignation at baseness and profligacy. Altogether, it is not much like the production of a mere man of letters, or a fastidious speculator in sentiment and morality; but exhibits throughout, and in a very pleasing form, the good sense and toleration of a man of the world, with much of that generous allowance for the
>
> 'Fears of the brave and follies of the wise,'
>
> which genius too often requires, and should therefore always be most forwa[illegible]o show. It is impossible, however, to avoid noticing that Mr. Scott is by far too favourable to the personal character of his author, whom we think it would really be injurious to the cause of morality to allow to pass either as a very dignified, or a very amiable person. The truth is, we think, that he was extremely ambitious, arrogant, and selfish; of a morose, vindictive, and haughty temper; and though capable of a sort of patronising generosity towards his dependants, and of some attachment towards those who had long known and flattered him, his general demeanour, both in public and private life, appears to have been far from exemplary; destitute of temper and magnanimity, and we will add, of principle, in the former; and in the latter, of tenderness, fidelity, or compassion."—*Edinburgh Review*, vol. xvii., p. 9.

I have no desire to break a lance in this place in defence of the personal character of Swift. It does not appear to me that he stands at all distinguished among politicians (least of all, among the politicians of his time) for laxity of principle; nor can I consent to charge his private demeanour with the absence either of tenderness, or fidelity, or compassion. But who ever dreamed—most assuredly not Scott—of holding up the Dean of St. Patrick's as on the whole an "exemplary character?" The biographer felt, whatever his critic may have thought on the subject, that a vein of morbid humour ran through Swift's whole existence, both mental and physical, from the beginning. "He early adopted," says Scott, "the custom of observing his birthday, as a term not of joy but of sorrow, and of reading, when it annually recurred, the striking passage of Scripture in which Job laments and execrates the day upon which it was said in his father's house *that a man-child was born;*" and I should have expected that any man who had considered the black close of the career thus early clouded, and read the entry in Swift's diary on the funeral of Stella, his epitaph on himself, and the testament by which he disposed of his fortune, would have been willing, like Scott, to dwell on the splendour of his immortal genius, and the many traits of manly generosity "which he unquestionably exhibited," rather than on the faults and foibles of nameless and inscrutable disease, which tormented and embittered the far greater part of his earthly being. What the critic says of the practical and business-like style of Scott's biography, appears very just—and I think the circumstance eminently characteristic—nor, on the whole, could his edition, as an edition, have been better dealt with than in the Essay which I have quoted. It was, by the way, written by Mr. Jeffrey, at Constable's particular request. "It was, I think, the first time I ever asked such a thing of him," the bookseller said to me; "and I assure you the result was no encouragement to repeat such petitions." Mr. Jeffrey attacked Swift's whole character at great length, and with consummate dexterity; and, in Constable's opinion, his article threw such a cloud on the Dean, as materially checked, for a time, the popularity of his writings. Admirable as the paper is, in point of ability, I think Mr. Constable may have considerably exaggerated its effects; but in those days it must have been difficult for him to form an impartial opinion upon such a question; for, as Johnson said of Cave, that "he could not spit over his window without thinking of The Gentleman's Magazine," I believe Constable allowed nothing to interrupt his paternal pride in the concerns of his Review, until the Waverley Novels supplied him with another periodical publication still more important to his fortunes.

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* The names which he particularly mentions, are those of the late Matthew Weld Hartstonge, Esq., of Dublin, Theophilus Swift, Esq., Major Tickell, Thomas Steele, Esq., Leonard Macnally, Esq., and the Rev. M. Berwick.

And this consummation was not long delayed; a considerable addition having by that time been made to the original fragment, there appeared in The Scot's Magazine, for February 1st, 1814, an announcement, that "Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since, a novel, in 3 vols. 12mo," would be published in March. And before Scott came into Edinburgh, at the close of the Christmas vacation, on the 12th of January, Mr. Erskine had perused the greater part of the first volume, and expressed his decided opinion that Waverley would prove the most popular of all his friend's writings. The MS. was forthwith copied by John Ballantyne, and sent to press. As soon as a volume was printed, Ballantyne conveyed it to Constable, who did not for a moment doubt from what pen it proceeded, but took a few days to consider of the matter, and then offered £700 for the copyright. When we recollect what the state of novel literature in those days was, and that the only exceptions to its mediocrity, the Irish Tales of Miss Edgeworth, however appreciated in refined circles, had a circulation so limited that she had never realized a tithe of £700 by the best of them—it must be allowed that Constable's offer was a liberal one. Scott's answer, however, transmitted through the same channel, was, that £700 was too much, in case the novel should not be successful, and too little in case it should. He added, "If our fat friend had said £1000, I should have been staggered." John did not forget to hint this last circumstance to Constable, but the latter did not choose to act upon it; and he ultimately published the work, on the footing of an equal division of profits between himself and the author. There was a considerable pause between the finishing of the first volume and the beginning of the second. Constable had, in 1812, acquired the copyright of the Encyclopædia Britannica, and was now preparing to publish the valuable *Supplement* to that work, which has since, with modifications, been incorporated into its text. He earnestly requested Scott to undertake a few articles for the Supplement; he agreed—and, anxious to gratify the generous bookseller, at once laid aside his tale until he had finished two essays—those on Chivalry and the Drama. They appear to have been completed in the course of April and May, and he received for each of them—(as he did subsequently for that on Romance)—£100.

The two next letters will give us, in more exact detail than the author's own recollection could supply in 1830, the history of the completion of Waverley. It was published on the 7th of July; and two days afterwards he thus writes:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P., London.

"Edinburgh, 9th July, 1814.

"My dear Morritt,

"I owe you many apologies for not sooner answering your very entertaining letter upon your Parisian journey. I heartily wish I had been of your party, for you have seen what I trust will not be seen again in a hurry; since, to enjoy the delight of a restoration, there is a necessity for a previous *bouleversement* of every thing that is valuable in morals and policy, which seems to have been the case in France since 1790.* The Duke of Buccleuch told me yesterday of a very good reply of Louis to some of his attendants, who proposed shutting the doors of his apartments to keep out the throng of people. 'Open the door,' he said, 'to John Bull; he has suffered a great deal in keeping the door open for me.'

"Now, to go from one important subject to another, I must account for my own laziness, which I do by referring you to a small anonymous sort of a novel, in three volumes, Waverley, which you will receive by the mail of this day. It was a very old attempt of mine to embody some traits of those characters and manners peculiar to Scotland, the last remnants of which vanished during my own youth, so that few or no traces now remain. I had written great part of the first volume, and sketched other passages, when I mislaid the MS., and only found it by the merest accident as I was rummaging the drawers of an old cabinet; and I took the fancy of finishing it, which I did so fast, that the last two volumes were written in three weeks. I had a great deal of fun in the accomplishment of this task, though I do not expect that it will be popular in the south, as much of the humour, if there be any, is local, and some of it even professional. You, however, who are an adopted Scotchman, will find some amusement in it. It has made a very strong impression here, and the good people of Edinburgh are busied in tracing the author, and in finding out originals for the portraits it contains. In the first case, they will probably find it difficult to convict the guilty author, although he is far from escaping

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* Mr. Morritt had, in the spring of this year, been present at the first levee held at the Tuileries by Monsieur, (afterwards Charles X.), as representative of his brother Louis XVIII. Mr. M. had not been in Paris till that time since 1789.

suspicion. Jeffrey has offered to make oath that it is mine, and another great critic has tendered his affidavit *ex contrario*; so that these authorities have divided the Gude Town. However, the thing has succeeded very well, and is thought highly of. I don't know if it has got to London yet. I intend to maintain my *incognito*. Let me know your opinion about it. I should be most happy if I could think it would amuse a painful thought at this anxious moment. I was in hopes Mrs. Morritt was getting so much better that this relapse affects me very much. Ever yours truly,
W. Scott."

"P. S.—As your conscience has very few things to answer for, you must still burthen it with the secret of the Bridal. It is spreading very rapidly, and I have one or two little fairy romances, which will make a second volume, and which I would wish published, but not with my name. The truth is, that this sort of muddling work amuses me, and I am something in the condition of Joseph Surface, who was embarrassed by getting himself too good a reputation; for many things may please people well enough anonymously, which, if they have me in the title-page, would just give me that sort of ill name which precedes hanging—and that would be in many respects inconvenient if I thought of again trying a *grande opus*."

This statement of the foregoing letter (repeated still more precisely in a following one), as to the time occupied in the composition of the second and third volumes of Waverley, recalls to my memory a trifling anecdote, which, as connected with a dear friend of my youth, whom I have not seen for many years, and may very probably never see again in this world, I shall here set down, in the hope of affording him a momentary, though not an unmixed pleasure, when he may chance to read this compilation on a distant shore—and also in the hope that my humble record may impart to some active mind in the rising generation a shadow of the influence which the reality certainly exerted upon his. Happening to pass through Edinburgh in June 1814, I dined one day with the gentleman in question (now the Honourable William Menzies, one of the Supreme Judges at the Cape of Good Hope), whose residence was then in George Street, situated very near to, and at right angles with, North Castle Street. It was a party of very young persons, most of them, like Menzies and myself, destined for the bar of Scotland, all gay and thoughtless, enjoying the first flush of manhood, with little remembrance of the yesterday or care of the morrow. When my companion's worthy father and uncle, after seeing two or three bottles go round, left the juveniles to themselves, the weather being hot, we adjourned to a library which had one large window looking northwards. After carousing here for an hour or more, I observed that a shade had come over the aspect of my friend, who happened to be placed immediately opposite to myself, and said something that intimated a fear of his being unwell. "No," said he, "I shall be well enough presently, if you will only let me sit where you are, and take my chair; for there is a confounded hand in sight of me here, which has often bothered me before, and now it won't let me fill my glass with a good will." I rose to change places with him accordingly, and he pointed out to me this hand which, like the writing on Belshazzar's wall, disturbed his hour of hilarity. "Since we sat down," he said, "I have been watching it—it fascinates my eye—it never stops—page after page is finished and thrown on that heap of MS., and still it goes on unwearied—and so it will be till candles are brought in, and God knows how long after that. It is the same every night—I can't stand the sight of it when I am not at my books." "Some stupid, dogged, engrossing clerk, probably," exclaimed myself or some other giddy youth in our society. "No, boys," said our host, "I well know what hand it is—'tis Walter Scott's." This was the hand that, in the evenings of three summer weeks, wrote the two last volumes of Waverley. Would that all who that night watched it, had profited by its example of diligence as largely as William Menzies!

In the next of these letters Scott enclosed to Mr. Morritt the Prospectus of a new edition of the old poems of the Bruce and the Wallace, undertaken by the learned lexicographer, Dr. John Jamieson; and he announces his departure on a sailing excursion round the north of Scotland. It will be observed, that when Scott began his letter, he had only had Mr. Morritt's opinion of the first volume of Waverley, and that before he closed it, he had received his friend's honest criticism on the work as a whole, with the expression of an earnest hope that he would drop his *incognito* on the title-page of a second edition.

J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P. Portland Place, London.

"Abbotsford, July 24, 1814.

"My dear Morritt,

"I am going to say my *vales* to you for some weeks, having accepted an invition from a committee of the Commissioners for the Northern Lights (I don't mean the Edinburgh Reviewers, but the *bonâ fide* commissioners for the beacons), to accompany them upon a nautical tour round Scotland, visiting all that is curious on continent and isle. The party are three gentlemen with whom I am very well acquainted, William Erskine being one. We have a stout cutter, well fitted up and manned for the service by Government; and to make assurance double sure, the admiral has sent a sloop of war to cruise in the dangerous points of our tour, and sweep the sea of the Yankee privateers, which sometimes annoy our northern latitudes. I shall visit the Clephanes in their solitude—and let you know all that I see that is rare and entertaining, which, as we are masters of our time and vessel, should add much to my stock of knowledge.

"As to Waverley, I will play Sir Fretful for once, and assure you that I left the story to flag in the first volume on purpose; the second and third have rather more bustle and interest. I wished (with what success Heaven knows) to avoid the ordinary error of novel-writers, whose first volume is usually their best. But since it has served to amuse Mrs. Morritt and you *usque ab initio*, I have no doubt you will tolerate it even unto the end. It may really boast to be a tolerably faithful portrait of Scottish manners, and has been recognised as such in Edinburgh. The first edition of a thousand instantly disappeared, and the bookseller informs me that the second, of double the quantity, will not supply the market for long. As I shall be very anxious to know how Mrs. Morritt is, I hope to have a few lines from you on my return, which will be about the end of August or beginning of September. I should have mentioned that we have the celebrated engineer, Stevenson, along with us. I delight in these professional men of talent; they always give you some new lights by the peculiarity of their habits and studies, so different from the people who are rounded, and smoothed, and ground down for conversation, and who can say all that every other person says, and—nothing more.

"What a miserable thing it is that our royal family cannot be quiet and decent at least, if not correct and moral in their deportment. Old farmer George's manly simplicity, modesty of expense, and domestic virtue, saved this country at its most perilous crisis; for it is inconceivable the number of persons whom these qualities united in his behalf, who would have felt but feebly the abstract duty of supporting a crown less worthily worn.

"—I had just proceeded thus far, when your kind favour of the 21st reached

Abbotsford. I am heartily glad you continued to like Waverley to the end. The hero is a sneaking piece of imbecility; and if he had married Flora, she would have set him up upon the chimney-piece, as Count Borowlaski's wife used to do with him.* I am a bad hand at depicting a hero properly so called, and have an unfortunate propensity for the dubious characters of borderers, buccaneers, Highland robbers, and all others of a Robin-Hood description. I do not know why it should be, as I am myself, like Hamlet, indifferent honest; but I suppose the blood of the old cattle-drivers of Teviotdale continues to stir in my veins.

"I shall *not* own Waverley; my chief reason is, that it would prevent me of the pleasure of writing again. David Hume, nephew of the historian, says the author must be of a jacobite family and predilections, a yeoman-cavalry man, and a Scottish lawyer, and desires me to guess in whom these happy attributes are united. I shall not plead guilty, however; and, as such seems to be the fashion of the day, I hope charitable people will believe my *affidavit* in contradiction to all other evidence. The Edinburgh faith now is, that Waverley is written by Jeffrey, having been composed to lighten the tedium of his late Transatlantic voyage. So you see the unknown infant is like to come to preferment. In truth, I am not sure it would be considered quite decorous for me, as a Clerk of Session, to write novels. Judges being monks, Clerks are a sort of lay brethren, from whom some solemnity of walk and conduct may be expected. So, whatever I may do of this kind, I shall whistle it down the wind to prey on fortune. I will take care, in the next edition, to make the corrections you recommend. The second is, I believe, nearly through the press. It will hardly be printed faster than it was written; for though the first volume was begun long ago, and actually lost for a time, yet the other two were begun and finished between the 4th June and the 1st July, during all which I attended my duty in Court, and proceeded without loss of time or hinderance of business.

"I wish, for poor auld Scotland's sake, and for the manes of Bruce and Wallace, and for the living comfort of a very worthy and ingenious dissenting clergyman, who has collected a library and medals of some value, and brought up, I believe, sixteen or seventeen children (his wife's ambition extended to twenty) upon about £150 a year—I say I wish, for all these reasons, you could get me among your wealthy friends a name or two for the enclosed proposals. The price is, I think, too high; but the booksellers fixed it two guineas above what I proposed. I trust it will be yet lowered to five guineas, which is a more comeatable sum than six. The poems themselves are great curiosities, both to the philologist and antiquary; and that of Bruce is invaluable, even to the historian. They have been hitherto wretchedly edited.

"I am glad you are not to pay for this scrawl. Ever yours,

Walter Scott.

"P. S.—I do not see how my silence can be considered as imposing on the public. If I give my name to a book without writing it, unquestionably that would be a trick. But, unless in the case of his averring facts which he may be called upon to defend or justify, I think an author may use his own discretion in giving or withholding his name. Harry Mackenzie never put his name in a title-page till the last edition of his works; and Swift only owned one out of his thousand and one publications. In point of emolument, every body knows that I sacrifice much money by withholding my name; and what should I gain by it, that any human being has a right to consider as an unfair advantage? In fact, only the freedom of writing trifles with less personal responsibility, and perhaps more frequently than I otherwise might do. W. S."

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* *Count Borowlaski* was a Polish dwarf, who, after realizing some money as an itinerant object of exhibition, settled, married, and died at Durham. He was a well-bred creature, and much noticed by the clergy and other gentry of that city. Indeed, even when travelling the country as a show, he had always maintained a sort of dignity. I remember him as going from house to house, when I was a child, in a sedan chair, with a servant in livery following him, who took the fee—*M. le Comte* himself (dressed in a scarlet coat and bag wig) being ushered into the room like any ordinary visitor.

I am not able to give the exact date of the following reply to one of John Ballantyne's expostulations on the subject of *the secret*:—

"No, John, I will not own the book—
I won't, you Picaroon.
When next I try St. Grubby's brook,
The A. of Wa—— shall bait the hook—
And flat-fish bite as soon,
As if before them they had got
The worn-out wriggler
Walter Scott."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

VOYAGE TO THE SHETLAND ISLES, ETC.—SCOTT'S DIARY KEPT ON BOARD THE LIGHT-HOUSE YACHT—JULY AND AUGUST.—1814.

The gallant composure with which Scott, when he had dismissed a work from his desk, awaited the decision of the public—and the healthy elasticity of spirit with which he could meanwhile turn his whole zeal upon new or different objects—are among the features in his character which will always, I believe, strike the student of literary history as most remarkable. We have now seen him before the fate of Waverley had been determined—before he had heard a word about its reception in England, except from one partial confidant—preparing to start on a voyage to the northern isles, which was likely to occupy the best part of two months, and in the course of which he could hardly expect to receive any intelligence from his friends in Edinburgh. The diary which he kept during this expedition, is—thanks to the leisure of a landsman on board—a very full one; and written without the least notion probably that it would ever be perused except in his own family circle, it affords such a complete and artless portraiture of the man, as he was in himself, and as he mingled with his friends and companions, at one of the most interesting periods of his life, that I am persuaded every reader will be pleased to see it printed in its original state. A few extracts from it were published by himself, in one of the Edinburgh Annual Registers—he also drew from it some of the notes to his Lord of the Isles, and the substance of several others for his romance of the Pirate. But the recurrence of these detached passages will not be complained of—expounded and illustrated as the reader will find them by the personal details of the context.

I have been often told by one of the companions of this voyage, that heartily as Scott entered throughout into their social enjoyments, they all perceived him, when inspecting for the first time scenes of remarkable grandeur, to be in such an abstracted and excited mood, that they felt it would be the kindest and discreetest plan to leave him to himself. "I often," said Lord Kinnedder, "on coming up from the cabin at night, found him pacing the deck rapidly, muttering to himself—and went to the forecastle, lest my presence should disturb him. I remember that at Loch Corriskin, in particular, he seemed quite overwhelmed with his feelings; and we all saw it, and retiring unnoticed, left him to roam and gaze about by himself, until it was time to muster the party and be gone." Scott used to mention the surprise with which he himself witnessed Erskine's emotion on first entering the cave of Staffa—"Would you believe it?" he said—"my poor Willie sat down and wept like a woman!" Yet his own sensibilities, though betrayed in a more masculine and sterner guise, were perhaps as keen as well as deeper than his amiable friend's.

The poet's Diary, contained in five little paper books, is as follows:—

"VACATION 1814.

"VOYAGE IN THE LIGHT-HOUSE YACHT TO NOVA ZEMBLA, AND THE LORD KNOWS WHERE.

"JULY 29th, 1814.—Sailed from Leith about one o'clock on board the Light-House Yacht, conveying six guns, and ten men, commanded by Mr. Wilson. The company—Commissioners of the Northern Lights; Robert Hamilton, Sheriff of Lanarkshire; William Erskine, Sheriff of Orkney and Zetland; Adam Duff, Sheriff of Forfarshire. Non-commissioners—Ipse Ego; Mr. David Marjoribanks, son to John Marjoribanks, Provost of Edinburgh, a young gentleman; Rev. Mr. Turnbull, Minister of Tingwall, in the presbytery of Shetland. But the official chief of the expedition is Mr. Stevenson, the Surveyor-Viceroy over the commissioners—a most gentlemanlike and modest man, and well known by his scientific skill.

"Reached the Isle of May in the evening; went ashore, and saw the light—an old tower, and much in the form of a border-keep, with a beacon-grate on the top. It is to be abolished for an oil revolving-light, the grate-fire only being ignited upon the leeward side when the wind is very high. *Quære*—Might not the grate revolve? The isle had once a cell or two upon it. The vestiges of the chapel are still visible. Mr. Stevenson proposed demolishing the old tower, and I recommended *ruining* it *à la picturesque*—*i. e.* demolishing it partially. The island might be made a delightful residence for sea-bathers.

"On board again in the evening: watched the progress of the ship round Fifeness, and the revolving motion of the now distant Bell-Rock light until the wind grew rough, and the landsmen sick. To bed at eleven, and slept sound.

"*30th July.*—Waked at six by the steward: summoned to visit the Bell-Rock, where the beacon is well worthy attention. Its dimensions are well known; but no description can give the idea of this slight, solitary, round tower, trembling amid the billows, and fifteen miles from Arbroath, the nearest shore. The fitting up within is not only handsome, but elegant. All work of wood (almost) is wainscot; all hammer-work brass; in short, exquisitely fitted up. You enter by a ladder of rope, with wooden steps, about thirty feet from the bottom, where the mason-work ceases to be solid, and admits of round apartments. The lowest is a store-house for the people's provisions, water, &c.; above that a store-house for the lights, of oil, &c.; then the kitchen of the people, three in number; then their sleeping-chamber; then the saloon or parlour, a neat little room; above all, the lighthouse; all communicating by oaken ladders, with brass rails, most handsomely and conveniently executed. Breakfasted in the parlour.* On board again at nine, and run down, through a rough sea, to Aberbrothock, vulgarly called Arbroath. All sick, even Mr. Stevenson. God grant this occur seldom! Landed and dined at Arbroath, where we were to take up Adam Duff. We visited the appointments of the lighthouse establishment—a handsome tower, with two wings. These contain the lodgings of the keepers of the light—very handsome, indeed, and very clean. They might be thought too handsome, were it not of consequence to give those men, entrusted with a duty so laborious and slavish, a consequence in the eyes of the public and in their own. The central part of the building forms a single tower, corresponding with the lighthouse. As the keeper's families live here, they are apprised each morning by a signal that *all is well.* If this signal be not made, a tender sails for the rock directly. I visited the abbey church for the third time, the first being—*eheu!**—the second with T. Thomson. Dined at Arbroath, and came on board at night, where I made up this foolish journal, and now beg for wine and water. So the vessel is once more in motion.

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* On being requested while at breakfast to inscribe his name in the album of the tower, Scott penned immediately the lines "Pharos Loquitur," which may be seen in the last edition of his Poetical Works, Vol. X. p. 355.

"31*st July.*—Waked at seven; vessel off Fowlsheugh and Dunnottar. Fair wind, and delightful day; glide enchantingly along the coast of Kincardineshire, and open the bay of Nigg about ten. At eleven, off Aberdeen; the gentlemen go ashore to Girdle-Ness, a projecting point of rock to the east of the harbour of Fort-Dee. There the magistrates of Aberdeen wish to have a fort and beacon-light. The Oscar, whaler, was lost here last year, with all her hands excepting two; about forty perished. Dreadful, to be wrecked so near a large and populous town! The view of Old and New Aberdeen from the sea is quite beautiful. About noon, proceed along the coast of Aberdeenshire, which, to the northwards, changes from a bold and rocky to a low and sandy character. Along the bay of Belhelvie, a whole parish was swallowed up by the shifting sands, and is still a desolate waste. It belonged to the Earls of Errol, and was rented at £500 a-year at the time. When these sands are past, the land is all arable. Not a tree to be seen; nor a grazing cow, or sheep, or even a labour-horse at grass, though this be Sunday. The next remarkable object was a fragment of the old castle of Slains, on a precipitous bank, overlooking the sea. The fortress was destroyed when James VI. marched north [A. D. 1594], after the battle of Glenlivat, to reduce Huntly and Errol to obedience. The family then removed to their present mean habitation, for such it seems, a collection of low houses forming a quadrangle, one side of which is built on the very verge of the precipice that overhangs the ocean. What seems odd, there are no stairs down to the beach. Imprudence, or ill fortune as fatal as the sands of Belhelvie, has swallowed up the estate of Errol, excepting this dreary mansion-house, and a farm or two adjoining. We took to the boat, and running along the coast, had some delightful sea-views to the northward of the castle. The coast is here very rocky; but the rocks, being rather soft, are wasted and corroded by the constant action of the waves,—and the fragments which remain, where the softer parts have been washed away, assume the appearance of old Gothic ruins. There are open arches, towers, steeples, and so forth. One part of this scaur is called *Dun Buy*, being coloured yellow by the dung of the sea-fowls, who build there in the most surprising numbers. We caught three young gulls. But the most curious object was the celebrated Buller of Buchan, a huge rocky cauldron, into which the sea rushes through a natural arch of rock. I walked round the top; in one place the path is only about two feet wide, and a monstrous precipice on either side. We then rowed into the cauldron or buller from beneath, and saw nothing around us but a regular wall of black rock, and nothing above but the blue sky. A fishing hamlet had sent out its inhabitants, who, gazing from the brink, looked like sylphs looking down upon gnomes. In the side of the cauldron opens a deep black cavern. Johnson says it might be a retreat from storms, which is nonsense. In a high gale the waves rush in with incredible violence. An old fisher said he had seen them flying over the natural wall of the buller, which cannot be less than 200 feet high. Same old man says Slains is now inhabited by a Mr. Bowles, who comes so far from the southward that naebody kens whare he comes frae. 'Was he frae the Indies?' 'Na; he did not think he came that road. He was far frae the southland. Naebody ever heard the name of the place; but he had brought more guid out o' Peterhead than a' the Lords he had seen in Slains, and he had seen three.' About half-past five we left this interesting spot, and after a hard pull, reached the yacht. Weather falls hazy and rather calm; but at sea we observe vessels enjoying more wind. Pass Peterhead, dimly distinguishing two steeples and a good many masts. Mormounthill said to resemble a coffin—a likeness of which we could not judge, Mormount being for the present invisible. Pass Rattray-Head: near this cape are dangerous shelves, called the Bridge of

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* This is, without doubt, an allusion to some happy day's excursion when his *first love* was of the party.

Rattray. Here the wreck of the Doris merchant vessel came on shore, lost last year with a number of passengers for Shetland. We lie off all night.

"*1st August.*—Off Frasersburgh—a neat little town. Mr. Stevenson and the commissioners go on shore to look at a light maintained there upon an old castle, on a cape called Kinnaird's Head. The morning being rainy, and no object of curiosity ashore, I remain on board, to make up my journal and write home.

"The old castle, now bearing the light, is a picturesque object from the sea. It was the baronial mansion of the Frasers, now Lords Saltoun—an old square tower with a minor fortification towards the landing-place on the sea-side. About eleven, the Commissioners came off, and we leave this town, the extreme point of the Moray Frith, to stretch for Shetland—salute the Castle with three guns, and stretch out with a merry gale. See Mormount, a long flattish-topped hill near to the West Troup-head, and another bold cliff promontory projecting into the frith. Our gale soon failed, and we are now all but becalmed; songs, ballads, recitations, backgammon, and picquet for the rest of the day. Noble sunset and moon rising; we are now out of sight of land.

"*2d August.*—At sea in the mouth of the Moray Frith. This day almost a blank —light baffling airs, which do us very little good, most of the landsmen sick, more or less; picquet, backgammon, and chess the only resources.—P. M. A breeze, and we begin to think we have passed the Fair Isle, lying between Shetland and Orkney, at which it was our intention to have touched. In short, like one of Sindbad's adventurers, we have run on till neither captain nor pilot know exactly where we are. The breeze increases—weather may be called rough; worse and worse after we are in our berths, nothing but booming, trampling, and whizzing of waves about our ears, and ever and anon, as we fall asleep, our ribs come in contact with those of the vessel; hail Duff and the Udaller* in the after-cabin, but they are too sick to answer. Towards morning, calm (comparative), and a nap.

"*3d August.*—At sea as before; no appearance of land; proposed that the sheriff of Zetland do issue a *meditatione fugæ* warrant against his territories, which seem to fly from us. Pass two whalers; speak the nearest, who had come out of Lerwick, which is about twenty miles distant; stand on with a fine breeze. About nine at night, with moonlight and strong twilight, we weather the point of Bardhead, and enter a channel about three-quarters of a mile broad, which forms the southern entrance to the harbour of Lerwick, where we cast anchor about half-past ten, and put Mr. Turnbull on shore.

"*4th August.*—Harbour of Lerwick. Admire the excellence of this harbour of the metropolis of Shetland. It is a most beautiful place, screened on all sides from the wind by hills of a gentle elevation. The town, a fishing village, built irregularly upon a hill ascending from the shore, has a picturesque appearance. On the left is Fort Charlotte, garrisoned of late by two companies of veterans. The Greenlandmen, of which nine fine vessels are lying in the harbour, add much to the liveliness of the scene. Mr. Duncan, sheriff-substitute, came off to pay his respects to his principal; he is married to a daughter of my early acquaintance, Walter Scott of Scots-hall. We go ashore. Lerwick, a poor-looking place, the streets flagged instead of being causewayed, for there are no wheel-carriages. The streets full of drunken riotous sailors, from the whale vessels. It seems these ships take about 1000 sailors from Zetland every year, and return them as they come back from the fishery. Each sailor may gain from £20 to £30, which is paid by the merchants of Lerwick, who have agencies from the owners of the whalers in England. The whole return may be between £25,000 and £30,000. These Zetlanders, as they get a part of this pay on landing, make a point of treating their English messmates, who get drunk of course, and are very riotous. The Zetlanders themselves do *not* get drunk, but go straight home to their houses, and reserve their hilarity for the winter season, when they spend their wages in dancing and drinking. Erskine finds employment as Sheriff, for the neighbourhood of the fort enables him to make *main forte*, and secure a number of the rioters. We visit F. Charlotte, which is a neat little fort mounting ten heavy guns to the sea, but only one to the land. Major F., the Governor, showed us the fort; it commands both entrances of the harbour: the north entrance is not very good, but the south, capital. The water in the harbour is very deep, as frigates of the smaller class lie almost close to the shore. Take a walk with Captain M'Diarmid, a gentlemanlike and intelligent officer of the garrison; we visit a small fresh-water loch called *Cleik-him-in;* it borders on the sea, from which it is only divided by a sort of beach, apparently artificial; though the sea lashes the outside of this beach, the water of the lake is not brackish. In this lake are the remains of a Picts' Castle, but ruinous. The people think the Castle has not been built on a natural island, but on an artificial one formed by a heap of stones. These Duns or Picts' Castles, are so small, it is impossible to conceive what effectual purpose they could serve, excepting a temporary refuge for the chief.—Leave *Cleik-him-in*, and proceed along the coast. The ground is dreadfully encumbered with stones; the patches, which have been sown with oats and barley, bear very good crops, but they are mere *patches*, the cattle and ponies feeding among them and secured by tethers. The houses most wretched, worse than the worst herd's house I ever saw. It would be easy to form a good farm by enclosing the ground with Galloway dykes, which would answer the purpose of clearing it at the same time of stones; and as there is plenty of lime-shell, marle, and alga-marina, manure could not be wanting. But there are several obstacles to improvement, chiefly in the undivided state of the properties, which lie *run-rig;* then the claims of Lord Dundas, the lord of the country; and, above all, perhaps, the state of the common people, who, dividing their attention between the fishery and the cultivation, are not much interested in the latter, and are often absent at the proper times of labour. Their ground is chiefly dug with the spade, and their ploughs are beyond description awkward. An odd custom prevails—any person, without exception (if I understand rightly), who wishes to raise a few kail, fixes upon any spot he pleases, encloses it with a dry stone-wall, uses it as a kail-yard till he works out the soil, then deserts it and makes another. Some dozen of these little enclosures, about twenty or thirty feet square, are in sight at once. They are called *planty-cruives;* and the Zetlanders are so far from reckoning this an invasion, or a favour on the part of the proprietor, that their most exaggerated description of an avaricious person is one who would refuse liberty for *planty-cruive;* or to infer the greatest contempt of another, they will say they would not hold a *planty-cruive* of him. It is needless to notice how much this license must interfere with cultivation.

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* Erskine—sheriff of Shetland and Orkney.

"Leaving the *cultivated* land, we turn more inland, and pass two or three small lakes. The muirs are mossy and sterile in the highest degree; the hills are clad with stunted heather, intermixed with huge great stones; much of an astringent root with a yellow flower, called *Tormentil*, used by the islanders in dressing leather in lieu of the oak bark. We climbed a hill about three miles from Lerwick to a cairn, which presents a fine view of the indented coast of the island, and the distant isles of Mousa and others. Unfortunately the day is rather hazy—return by a circuitous route, through the same sterile country. These muirs are used as a commonty by the proprietors of the parishes in which they lie, and each, without any regard to the extent of his peculiar property, puts as much stock upon them as he chooses. The sheep are miserable-looking, hairy-legged creatures, of all colours, to sky-blue. I often wondered where Jacob got speckled lambs; I think now they must have been of the Shetland stock. In our return, pass the upper end of the little lake of *Cleik-him-in*, which is divided by a rude causeway from another small loch, communicating with it, however, by a sluice, for the purpose of driving a mill. But such a mill! The wheel is horizontal, with the cogs turned diagonally to the water; the beam stands upright, and in a stone-quern of the old-fashioned construction. This simple machine is enclosed in a hovel about the size of a pig-stye, and there is the mill![*] There are about 500 such mills in Shetland, each incapable of grinding more than a sack at a time.

"I cannot get a distinct account of the nature of the land rights. The Udal proprietors have ceased to exist, yet proper feudal tenures seem ill understood. Districts of ground are in many instances understood to belong to Townships or Communities, possessing what may be arable by patches, and what is muir as a commonty, *pro indiviso.* But then individuals of such a Township often take it upon them to grant feus of particular parts of the property thus possessed *pro indiviso.* The town of Lerwick is built upon a part of the commonty of Sound, the proprietors of the houses having feu rights from different heritors of that Township, but why from one rather than another, or how even the whole Township combining (which has not yet been attempted) could grant such a right upon principle, seems altogether uncertain. In the mean time the chief stress is laid upon occupance. I should have supposed upon principle, that Lord Dundas, as superior, possessed the *dominium eminens*, and ought to be resorted to as the source of land rights. But it is not so. It has been found that the heritors of each Township hold directly of the Crown, only paying the *Scat*, or Norwegian land-tax, and other duties to his lordship, used and wont. Besides, he has what are called property lands in every Township, or in most, which he lets to his tenants. Lord Dundas is now trying to introduce the system of leases and a better kind of agriculture. Return home and dine at Sinclair's, a decent inn—Captain M'Diarmid and other gentlemen dine with us.—Sleep at the inn on a straw couch.

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[*] Here occurs a rude scratch of drawing.

"*5th August*, 1814.—Hazy disagreeable morning—Erskine trying the rioters—notwithstanding which a great deal of rioting still in the town. The Greenlanders, however, only quarrelled among themselves, and the Zetland sailors seemed to exert themselves in keeping peace. They are, like all the other Zetlanders I have seen, a strong, clear-complexioned, handsome race, and the women are very pretty. The females are rather slavishly employed, however, and I saw more than one carrying home the heavy sea-chests of their husbands, brothers, or lovers, discharged from on board the Greenlanders. The Zetlanders are, however, so far provident, that when they enter the navy they make liberal allowance of their pay for their wives and families. Not less than £15,000 a-year has been lately paid by the Admiralty on this account; yet this influx of money, with that from the Greenland fishery, seems rather to give the means of procuring useless indulgences than of augmenting the stock of productive labour. Mr. Collector Ross tells me that from the King's books it appears that the quantity of spirits, tea, coffee, tobacco, snuff, and sugar, imported annually into Lerwick for the consumption of Zetland, averages at sale price, £20,000 yearly, at the least. Now the inhabitants of Zetland, men, women, and children, do not exceed 22,000 in all, and the proportion of foreign luxuries seems monstrous, unless we allow for the habits contracted by the seamen in their foreign trips. Tea, in particular, is used by all ranks, and porridge quite exploded.

"We parade Lerwick. The most remarkable thing is that, the main street being flagged, and all the others very narrow lanes descending the hill by steps, any thing like a cart of the most ordinary and rude construction, seems not only out of question when the town was built, but in its present state quite excluded. A road of five miles in length, on the line between Lerwick and Scalloway, has been already made—upon a very awkward and expensive plan, and ill-lined as may be supposed. But it is proposed to extend this road by degrees: carts will then be introduced, and by crossing the breed of their ponies judiciously, they will have Galloways to draw them. The streets of Lerwick (as one blunder perpetuates another) will then be a bar to improvement, for till the present houses are greatly altered no cart can approach the quay. In the garden of Captain Nicolson, R. N., which is rather in a flourishing state, he has tried various trees, almost all of which have died except the willow. But the plants seem to me to be injured in their passage; seeds would perhaps do better. We are visited by several of the notables of the island, particularly Mr. Mowat, a considerable proprietor, who claims acquaintance with me as the friend of my father, and remembers me as a boy. The day clearing up, Duff and I walk with this good old gentleman to *Cleik-him-in*, and with some trouble drag a boat off the beach into the fresh-water loch, and go to visit the Picts' castle. It is of considerable size, and consists of three circular walls, of huge natural stones admirably combined without cement. The outer circuit seems to have been simply a bounding wall or bulwark. The second or interior defence contains lodgements such as I shall describe. This inner circuit is surrounded by a wall of about sixteen or eighteen feet thick, composed, as I said, of huge massive stones placed in layers with great art, but without mortar or cement. The wall is not perpendicular, but the circle lessens gradually towards the top, as an old fashioned pigeon-house. Up the interior of this wall, there proceeds a circular winding gallery, ascending in the form of an inclined plane, so as to gain the top by circling round like a cork-screw within the walls. This is enlightened by little apertures (about two feet by three) into the inside, and also, it is said, by small slits—of which I saw none. It is said there are marks of galleries within the circuit, running parallel to the horizon; these I saw no remains of; and the interior gallery, with its apertures, is so extremely low and narrow, being only about three feet square, that it is difficult to conceive how it could serve the purpose of communication. At any rate, the size fully justifies the tradition prevalent here, as well as in the south of Scotland, that the Picts were a diminutive race. More of this when we see the more perfect specimen of a Pict castle in Mousa, which we resolve to examine, if it be possible. Certainly I am deeply curious to see what must be one of the most ancient houses in the world, built by a people who, while they seem to have bestowed much pains on their habitations, knew neither the art of cement, of arches, or of stairs. The situation is wild, dreary, and impressive. On the land side are huge sheets and fragments of rocks, interspersed with a stinted vegetation of grass and heath, which bears no proportion to the rocks and stones. From the top of his tower the Pictish Monarch might look out upon a stormy sea, washing a succession of rocky capes, reaches, and headlands, and immediately around him was the deep fresh-water loch on which his fortress was constructed. It communicates with the land by a sort of causeway, formed, like the artificial islet itself, by heaping together stones till the pile reached the surface of the water. This is usually passable, but at present overflooded.—Return and dine with Mr. Duncan, Sheriff-substitute—are introduced to Dr. Edmonstone, author of a History of Shetland, who proposes to accompany us to-morrow to see the Cradle of Noss. I should have mentioned that Mr. Stevenson sailed this morning with the yacht to survey some isles to the northward; he returns on Saturday, it is hoped.

"*6th August.*—Hire a six-oared boat, whaler-built, with a taper point at each end, so that the rudder can be hooked on either at pleasure. These vessels look very frail, but are admirably adapted to the stormy seas, where they live when a ship's boat stiffly and compactly built must necessarily perish. They owe this to their elasticity and lightness. Some of the rowers wear a sort of coats of dressed sheep leather, sewed together with thongs. We sailed out at the southern inlet of the harbour, rounding successively the capes of the Hammer, Kirkubus, the Ving, and others, consisting of bold cliffs, hollowed into caverns, or divided into pillars and arches of fantastic appearance, by the constant action of the waves. As we passed the most northerly of these capes, called, I think, the Ord, and turned into the open sea, the scenes became yet more tremendously sublime. Rocks upwards of three or four hundred feet in height, presented themselves in gigantic succession, sinking perpendicularly into the main, which is very deep even within a few fathoms of their base. One of these capes is called the Bard-head; a huge projecting arch is named the Giant's Leg.

'Here the lone sea-bird wakes his wildest cry.'

Not lone, however, in one sense, for their numbers, and the variety of their tribes, are immense, though I think they do not quite equal those of Dunbuy, on the coast of Buchan. Standing across a little bay, we reached the Isle of Noss, having hitherto coasted the shore of Bressay. Here we see a detached and precipitous rock, or island, being a portion rent by a narrow sound from the rest of the cliff, and called the Holm. This detached rock is wholly inaccessible, unless by a pass of peril, entitled the Cradle of Noss, which is a sort of wooden chair, travelling from precipice to precipice on rings, which run upon two cables stretched across over the gulf. We viewed this extraordinary contrivance from beneath, at the distance of perhaps one hundred fathoms at least. The boatmen made light of the risk of crossing it, but it must be tremendous to a brain disposed to be giddy. Seen from beneath, a man in the basket would resemble a large crow or raven floating between rock and rock. The purpose of this strange contrivance is to give the tenant the benefit of putting a few sheep upon the Holm, the top of which is level, and affords good pasture. The animals are transported in the cradle by one at a time, a shepherd holding them upon his knees. The channel between the Holm and the isle is passable by boats in calm weather, but not at the time when we saw it. Rowing on through a heavy tide, and nearer the breakers than any but Zetlanders would have ventured, we rounded another immensely high cape, called by the islanders the Noup of Noss, but by sailors Hang-Cliff, from its having a projecting appearance. This was the highest rock we had yet seen, though not quite perpendicular.

Its height has never been measured: I should judge it exceeds 600 feet; it has been conjectured to measure 800 and upwards. Our steersman had often descended this precipitous rock, having only the occasional assistance of a rope, one end of which he secured from time to time round some projecting cliff. The collecting sea-fowl for their feathers was the object, and he might gain five or six dozen, worth eight or ten shillings, by such an adventure. These huge precipices abound with caverns, many of which run much farther into the rock than any one has ventured to explore. We entered (with much hazard to our boat) one called the Orkney-man's Harbour, because an Orkney vessel run in there some years since to escape a French privateer. The entrance was lofty enough to admit us without striking the mast, but a sudden turn in the direction of the cave would have consigned us to utter darkness if we had gone in farther. The dropping of the sea-fowl and cormorants into the water from the sides of the cavern, when disturbed by our approach, had something in it wild and terrible.

"After passing the Noup, the precipices become lower, and sink into a rocky shore with deep indentations, called by the natives, *Gios*. Here we would fain have landed to visit the Cradle from the top of the cliff, but the surf rendered it impossible. We therefore rowed on like Thalaba in 'Allah's name,' around the Isle of Noss, and landed upon the opposite side of the small sound which divides it from Bressay. Noss exactly resembles in shape Salisbury crags, supposing the sea to flow down the valley called the Hunter's bog, and round the foot of the precipice. The eastern part of the isle is fine smooth pasture, the best I have seen in these isles, sloping upwards to the verge of the tremendous rocks which form its western front.

"As we are to dine at Gardie-House (the seat of young Mr. Mowat), on the Isle of Bressay, Duff and I—who went together on this occasion—resolve to walk across the island, about three miles, being by this time thoroughly wet. Bressay is a black and heathy isle, full of little lochs and bogs. Through storm and shade, and dense and dry, we find our way to Gardie, and have then to encounter the sublunary difficulties of wanting the keys of our portmanteaus, &c., the servants having absconded to see the Cradle. These being overcome, we are most hospitably treated at Gardie. Young Mr. Mowat, son of my old friend, is an improver, and a *modcrate* one. He has got a ploughman from Scotland, who acts as *grieve*, but as yet with the prejudices and inconveniences which usually attach themselves to the most salutary experiments. The ploughman complains that the Zetlanders work as if a spade or hoe burned their fingers, and that though they only got a shilling a day, yet the labour of three of them does not exceed what one good hand in Berwickshire would do for 2s. 6d. The islanders retort, that a man can do no more than he can; that they are not used to be taxed to their work so severely; that they will work as their fathers did, and not otherwise; and at first the landlord found difficulty in getting hands to work under his Caledonian taskmaster. Besides, they find fault with his *ho*, and *gee*, and *wo*, when ploughing. 'He speaks to the horse,' they say, 'and they gang—and there's something no canny about the man.' In short, between the prejudices of laziness and superstition, the ploughman leads a sorry life of it; yet these prejudices are daily abating, under the steady and indulgent management of the proprietor. Indeed, nowhere is improvement in agriculture more necessary. An old-fashioned Zetland plough is a real curiosity. It had but one handle, or stilt, and a coulter, but no sock; it ripped the furrow, therefore, but did not throw it aside. When this precious machine was in motion, it was dragged by four little bullocks yoked abreast, and as many ponies harnessed, or rather strung, to the plough by ropes and thongs of raw hide. One man went before, walking backward, with his face to the bullocks, and pulling them forward by main strength. Another held down the plough by its single handle, and made a sort of slit in the earth, which two women, who closed the procession, converted into a furrow, by throwing the earth aside with shovels. An antiquary might be of opinion that this was the very model of the original plough invented by Triptolemus; and it is but justice to Zetland to say, that these relics of ancient agricultural art will soon have all the interest attached to rarity. We could only hear of one of these ploughs within three miles of Lerwick.

"This and many other barbarous habits to which the Zetlanders were formerly wedded, seem only to have subsisted because their amphibious character of fishers and farmers induced them to neglect agricultural arts. A Zetland farmer looks to the sea to pay his rent; if the land finds him a little meal and kail, and (if he be a very clever fellow) a few potatoes, it is very well. The more intelligent part of the landholders are sensible of all this, but argue like men of good sense and humanity on the subject. To have good farming, you must have a considerable farm, upon which capital may be laid out to advantage. But to introduce this change suddenly would turn adrift perhaps twenty families, who now occupy small farms *pro indiviso*, cultivating by patches, or *rundale* and *runrig*, what part of the property is arable, and stocking the pasture as a common upon which each family turns out such stock as they can rear, without observing any proportion as to the number which it can support. In this way many townships, as they are called, subsist indeed, but in a precarious and indigent manner. Fishing villages seem the natural resource for this excess of population; but, besides the expense of erecting them, the habits of the people are to be considered, who, with 'one foot on land and one on sea,' would be with equal reluctance confined to either element. The remedy seems to be, that the larger proprietors should gradually set the example of better cultivation, and introduce better implements. They will, by degrees, be imitated by the inferior proprietors, and by their tenants; and, as turnips and hay crops become more general, a better and heavier class of stock will naturally be introduced.

"The sheep in particular might be improved into a valuable stock, and would no doubt thrive, since the winters are very temperate. But I should be sorry that extensive pasture farms were introduced, as it would tend to diminish a population invaluable for the supply of our navy. The improvement of the arable land, on the contrary, would soon set them beyond the terrors of famine with which the islanders are at present occasionally visited; and, combined with fisheries, carried on not by farmers, but by real fishers, would amply supply the inhabitants, without diminishing the export of dried fish. This separation of trades will in time take place, and then the prosperous days of Zetland will begin. The proprietors are already upon the alert, studying the means of gradual improvement, and no humane person would wish them to drive it on too rapidly, to the distress and perhaps destruction of the numerous tenants who have been bred under a different system.

"I have gleaned something of the peculiar superstitions of the Zetlanders, which are numerous and potent. Witches, fairies, &c., are as numerous as ever they were in Teviotdale. The latter are called *Trows*, probably from the Norwegian *Dwärg* (or *dwarf*,) the D being readily converted into T. The dwarfs are the prime agents in the machinery of Norwegian superstition. The *trows* do not differ from the fairies of the Lowlands, or *Sighean* of the Highlanders. They steal children, dwell within the interior of green hills, and often carry mortals into their recesses. Some, yet alive, pretend to have been carried off in this way, and obtain credit for the marvels they tell of the subterranean habitations of the trows. Sometimes, when a person becomes melancholy and low-spirited, the trows are supposed to have stolen the real being, and left a moving phantom to represent him. Sometimes they are said to steal only the heart—like Lancashire witches. There are cures in each case. The party's friends resort to a cunning man or woman, who hangs about the neck a triangular stone in the shape of a heart, or conjures back the lost individual, by retiring to the hills and employing the necessary spells. A common receipt, when a child appears consumptive and puny, is, that the conjurer places a bowl of water on the patient's head, and pours melted lead into it through the wards of a key. The metal assumes of course a variety of shapes, from which he selects a portion, after due consideration, which is sewn into the shirt of the patient. Sometimes no part of the lead suits the seer's fancy. Then the operation is recommenced, until he obtains a fragment of such a configuration as suits his mystical purpose. Mr. Duncan told us he had been treated in this way when a boy.

"A worse and most horrid opinion prevails, or did prevail, among the fishers—namely, that he who saves a drowning man will receive at his hands some deep wrong or injury. Several instances were quoted to-day in company, in which the utmost violence had been found necessary to compel the fishers to violate this inhuman prejudice. It is conjectured to have arisen as an apology for rendering no assistance to the mariners as they escaped from a shipwrecked vessel, for these isles are infamous for plundering wrecks. A story is told of the crew of a stranded vessel who were warping themselves ashore by means of a hawser which they had fixed to the land. The islanders (of Unst, as I believe) watched their motions in silence, till an old man reminded them that if they suffered these sailors to come ashore, they would consume all their winter stock of provisions. A Zetlander cut the hawser, and the poor wretches, twenty in number, were all swept away. This is a tale of former times—the cruelty would not now be *active;* but I fear that even yet the drowning mariner would in some places receive no assistance in his exertions, and certainly he would in most be plundered to the skin upon his landing. The gentlemen do their utmost to prevent this infamous practice. It may seem strange that the natives should be so little affected by a distress to which they are themselves so constantly exposed. But habitual exposure to danger hardens the heart against its consequences, whether to ourselves or others. There is yet living a man—if he can be called so—to whom the following story belongs:—He was engaged in catching sea-fowl upon one of the cliffs, with his father and brother. All three were suspended by a cord, according to custom, and overhanging the ocean, at the height of some hundred feet. This man being uppermost on the cord, observed that it was giving way, as unable to support their united weight. He called out to his brother who was next to him—'Cut away a nail below, Willie,' meaning he should cut the rope beneath, and let his father drop. Willie refused, and bid him cut himself, if he pleased. He did so, and his brother and father were precipitated into the sea. He never thought of concealing or denying the adventure in all its parts. We left Gardie-House late; being on the side of the Isle of Bressay, opposite to Lerwick, we were soon rowed across the bay. A laugh with Hamilton,[*] whose gout keeps him stationary at Lerwick, but whose good-humour defies gout and every other provocation, concludes the evening.

"*7th August,* 1814. Being Sunday, Duff, Erskine, and I rode to Tingwall upon Zetland ponies, to breakfast with our friend Parson Turnbull, who had come over in our yacht. An ill-conducted and worse-made road served us four miles on our journey. This *Via Flaminia* of Thule terminates, like its prototype, in a bog. It is, however, the only road in these isles, except about half a mile made by Mr. Turnbull. The land in the interior much resembles the Peel-heights, near Ashestiel; but, as you approach the other side of the island, becomes better. Tingwall is rather a fertile valley, up which winds a loch of about two miles in length. The kirk and manse stand at the head of the loch, and command a view down the valley to another lake beyond the first, and thence over another reach of land, to the ocean, indented by capes and studded with isles; among which, that of St. Ninian's, abruptly divided from the mainland by a deep chasm, is the most conspicuous. Mr. Turnbull is a Jedburgh man by birth, but a Zetlander by settlement and inclination. I have reason to be proud of my countryman;—he is doing his best, with great patience and judgment, to set a good example both in temporals and spirituals, and is generally beloved and respected among all classes. His glebe is in far the best order of any ground I have seen in Zetland. It is enclosed chiefly with dry-stone, instead of the useless turf-dikes; and he has sown grass, and has a hay-stack, and a second crop of clover, and may claim well-dressed fields of potatoes, barley, and oats. The people around him are obviously affected by his example. He gave us an excellent discourse and remarkably good prayers, which are seldom the excellence of the Presbyterian worship. The congregation were numerous, decent, clean, and well-dressed. The men have all the air of seamen, and are a good-looking hardy race. Some of the old fellows have got faces much resembling Tritons; if they had had conches to blow, it would have completed them. After church, ride down the loch to Scalloway—the country wild but pleasant, with sloping hills of good pasturage, and patches of cultivation on the lower ground. Pass a huge standing stone, or pillar. Here, it is said, the son of an old Earl of the Orkneys met his fate. He had rebelled against his father, and fortified himself in Zetland. The Earl sent a party to dislodge him, who, not caring to proceed to violence against his person, failed in the attempt. The Earl then sent a stronger force, with orders to take him dead or alive. The young Absalom's castle was stormed—he himself fled across the loch, and was overtaken and slain at this pillar. The Earl afterwards executed the perpetrators of the slaughter, though they had only fulfilled his own mandate.

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[*] Robert Hamilton, Sheriff of Lanarkshire, and afterwards one of the Clerks of Session, was a particular favourite with Scott—first, among many other good reasons, because he had been a soldier in his youth, had fought gallantly and been wounded severely in the American war, and was a very Uncle Toby in military enthusiasm; 2dly, because he was a brother antiquary of the genuine Monkbarns breed; 3dly (last not least), because he was, in spite of the example of the head of his name and race, a steady Tory. Mr. Hamilton sent for Scott when upon his deathbed in 1831, and desired him to choose, and carry off as a parting memorial, any article he liked in his collection of arms. Sir Walter (by that time sorely shattered in his own health) selected the sword with which his good friend had been begirt at Bunker's Hill.

" We reach Scalloway, and visit the ruins of an old castle, composed of a double tower, or keep, with turrets at the corners. It is the principal, if not the only ruin of Gothic times in Zetland, and is of very recent date, being built in 1600. It was built by Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney, afterwards deservedly executed at Edinburgh for many acts of tyranny and oppression. It was this rapacious Lord who imposed many of those heavy duties still levied from the Zetlanders by Lord Dundas. The exactions by which he accomplished this erection were represented as grievous. He was so dreaded, that upon his trial one Zetland witness refused to say a word till he was assured that there was no chance of the Earl returning to Scalloway. Over the entrance of the castle are his arms, much defaced, with the unicorns of Scotland for supporters, the assumption of which was one of the articles of indictment. There is a Scriptural inscription also above the door, in Latin, now much defaced.—

'PATRICIUS ORCHADIÆ ET ZETLANDIÆ COMES. A. D. 1600.
CUJUS FUNDAMEN SAXUM EST, DOMUS ILLA MANEBIT
STABILIS: E CONTRA, SI SIT ARENA, PERIT.'

" This is said to have been furnished to Earl Patrick by a Presbyterian divine, who slily couched under it an allusion to the evil practices by which the Earl had established his power. He perhaps trusted that the language might disguise the import from the Earl.* If so, the Scottish nobility are improved in literature, for the Duke of Gordon pointed out an error in the Latinity.

" Scalloway has a beautiful and very safe harbour, but as it is somewhat difficult of access, from a complication of small islands, it is inferior to Lerwick. Hence, though still nominally the capital of Zetland, for all edictal citations are made at Scalloway, it has sunk into a small fishing hamlet. The Norwegians made their original settlement in this parish of Tingwall. At the head of this loch, and just below the manse, is a small round islet accessible by stepping-stones, where they held their courts; hence the islet is called Law-ting—Ting, or thing, answering to our word business, exactly like the Latin *negotium*. It seems odd that in Dumfries-shire, and even in the Isle of Man, where the race and laws were surely Celtic, we have this Gothic word Ting and Ting-wald applied in the same way. We dined with Mr. Scott of Scalloway, who, like several families of this name in Shetland, is derived from Scotstarvet. They are very clannish, marry much among themselves, and are proud of their descent. Two young ladies, daughters of Mr. Scott's, dined with us—they were both Mrs. Scotts, having married brothers—the husband of one was lost in the unfortunate Doris. They were pleasant, intelligent women, and exceedingly obliging. Old Mr. Scott seems a good country gentleman. He is negotiating an exchange with Lord Dundas, which will give him the Castle of Scalloway and two or three neighbouring islands: the rest of the archipelago (seven I think in number) are already his own. He will thus have command of the whole fishing and harbour, for which he parts with an estate of more immediate value, lying on the other side of the mainland. I found my name made me very popular in this family, and there were many enquiries after the state of the Buccleuch family, in which they seemed to take much interest. I found them possessed of the remarkable circumstances attending the late projected sale of Ancrum, and the death of Sir John Scott, and thought it strange that, settled for three generations in a country so distant, they should still take an interest in those matters. I was loaded with shells and little curiosities for my young people.

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* In his reviewal of Pitcairn's Trials (1831), Scott says—" In erecting this Earl's Castle of Scalloway, and other expensive edifices, the King's tenants were forced to work in quarries, transport stone, dig, delve, climb, and build, and submit to all possible sorts of servile and painful labour, without either meat, drink, hire, or recompense of any kind. 'My father,' said Earl Patrick, 'built his house at Sumburgh on the sand, and it has given way already; this of mine on the rock shall abide and endure.' He did not, or would not, understand that the oppression, rapacity, and cruelty, by means of which the house arose, were what the clergyman really pointed to in his recommendation of a motto. Accordingly, the huge tower remains wild and desolate—its chambers filled with sand, and its rifted walls and dismantled battlements giving unrestrained access to the roaring sea blast."—For more of Earl Patrick, see Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xxi. pp. 230, 233; vol. xxiii. pp. 327, 329.

"There was a report (January was two years) of a kraken or some monstrous fish being seen off Scalloway. The object was visible for a fortnight, but nobody dared approach it, although I should have thought the Zetlanders would not have feared the devil if he came by water. They pretended that the suction, when they came within a certain distance, was so great as to endanger their boats. The object was described as resembling a vessel with her keel turned upmost in the sea, or a small ridge of rock or island. Mr. Scott thinks it might have been a vessel overset, or a large whale; if the latter, it seems odd they should not have known it, as whales are the intimate acquaintances of all Zetland sailors. Whatever it was, it disappeared after a heavy gale of wind, which seems to favour the idea that it was the wreck of a vessel. Mr. Scott seems to think Pontopiddan's narrations and descriptions are much more accurate than we inland men suppose; and I find most Zetlanders of the same opinion. Mr. Turnbull, who is not credulous upon these subjects, tells me that this year a parishioner of his, a well-informed and veracious person, saw an animal, which, if his description was correct, must have been of the species of sea-snake, driven ashore on one of the Orkneys two or three years ago. It was very long, and seemed about the thickness of a Norway log, and swam on the top of the waves, occasionally lifting and bending its head. Mr. T. says he has no doubt of the veracity of the narrator, but still thinks it possible it may have been a mere log or beam of wood, and that the spectator may have been deceived by the motion of the waves, joined to the force of imagination. This for the Duke of Buccleuch.

"At Scalloway my curiosity was gratified by an account of the sword-dance, now almost lost, but still practised in the Island of Papa, belonging to Mr. Scott. There are eight performers, seven of whom represent the Seven Champions of Christendom, who enter one by one with their swords drawn, and are presented to the eighth personage, who is not named. Some rude couplets are spoken (in *English*, not *Norse*), containing a sort of panegyric upon each champion as he is presented. They then dance a sort of cotillion, as the ladies described it, going through a number of evolutions with their swords. One of my three Mrs. Scotts readily promised to procure me the lines, the rhymes, and the form of the dance. I regret much that young Mr. Scott was absent during this visit; he is described as a reader and an enthusiast in poetry. Probably I might have interested him in preserving the dance, by causing young persons to learn it. A few years since, a party of Papa-men came to dance the sword-dance at Lerwick as a public exhibition with great applause. The warlike dances of the northern people, of which I conceive this to be the only remnant in the British dominions,* are repeatedly alluded to by their poets and historians. The introduction of the Seven Champions savours of a later period, and was probably ingrafted upon the dance when *mysteries* and *moralities* (the first scenic representations) came into fashion. In a stall pamphlet, called the History of Buckshaven, it is said those fishers sprung from Danes, and brought with them their *war-dance* or *sword-dance*, and a rude wooden cut of it is given. We resist the hospitality of our entertainers, and return to Lerwick despite a most downright fall of rain. My pony stumbles coming down hill; saddle, sways round, having but one girth, and that too long, and lays me on my back. N. B. The bogs in Zetland as soft as those in Liddesdale. Get to Lerwick about ten at night. No yacht has yet appeared.

"*8th August.*—No yacht, and a rainy morning; bring up my journal. Day clears up, and we go to pay our farewell visits of thanks to the hospitable Lerwegians, and at the Fort. Visit kind old Mr. Mowat, and walk with him and Collector Ross to the point of Quaggers, or Twaggers, which forms one arm of the southern entrance to the sound of Bressay. From the eminence a delightful sea view, with several of those narrow capes and deep reaches or inlets of the sea, which indent the shores of that land. On the right hand a narrow bay, bounded by the isthmus of Sound, with a house upon it resembling an old castle. In the indenture of the bay, and divided from the sea by a slight causeway, the lake of *Cleik-him-in*, with its Pictish Castle. Beyond this the bay opens another yet; and, behind all, a succession of capes, headlands and islands, as far as the cape called Sumburgh-head, which is the furthest point of Zetland in that direction. Inland, craggy, and sable muirs, with cairns, among which we distinguish the Wart or Ward of Wick, to which we walked on the 4th. On the left the island of Bressay, with its peaked hill called the Wart of Bressay. Over Bressay see the top of Hang-cliff. Admire the Bay of Lerwick, with its shipping, widening out to the northwards, and then again contracted into a narrow sound, through which the infamous Bothwell was pursued by Kirkaldy of Grange, until he escaped through the dexterity of his pilot, who sailed close along a sunken rock, upon which Kirkaldy, keeping the weather-gage, struck, and sustained damage. The rock is visible at low water, and is still called the Unicorn, from the name of Kirkaldy's vessel. Admire Mr. Mowat's little farm, of about thirty acres, bought about twenty years since for £75, and redeemed from the miserable state of the surrounding country, so that it now bears excellent corn; here also was a hay crop. With Mr. Turnbull's it makes two. Visit Mr. Ross, collector of the customs, who presents me with the most superb collection of the stone axes (or adzes, or whatever they are), called *celts*. The Zetlanders call them *thunderbolts*, and keep them in their houses as a receipt against thunder; but the Collector has succeeded in obtaining several. We are now to dress for dinner with the Notables of Lerwick, who give us an entertainment in their Town-hall. Oho!

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* Mr. W. S. Rose informs me that, when he was at school at Winchester, the morris-dancers there used to exhibit a sword-dance resembling that described at Camacho's wedding in Don Quixote; and Mr. Morritt adds, that similar dances are even yet performed in the villages about Rokeby every Christmas.

"Just as we were going to dinner, the yacht appeared, and Mr. Stevenson landed. He gives a most favourable account of the isles to the northward, particularly Unst. I believe Lerwick is the worst part of Shetland. Are hospitably received and entertained by the Lerwick gentlemen. They are a quick intelligent race—chiefly of Scottish birth, as appears from their names, Mowat, Gifford, Scott, and so forth. These are the chief proprietors. The Norwegian or Danish surnames, though of course the more ancient, belong, with some exceptions, to the lower ranks. The Veteran Corps expects to be disbanded, and the officers and Lerwegians seem to part with regret. Some of the officers talk of settling here. The price of every thing is moderate, and the style of living unexpensive. Against these conveniences are to be placed a total separation from public life, news, and literature; and a variable and inhospitable climate. Lerwick will suffer most severely if the Fort is not occupied by some force or other; for, between whisky and frolic, the Greenland sailors will certainly burn the little town. We have seen a good deal, and heard much more of the pranks of these unruly guests. A gentleman of Lerwick, who had company to dine with him, observed beneath his window a party of sailors eating a leg of roast mutton, which he witnessed with philanthropic satisfaction, till he received the melancholy information, that that individual leg of mutton, being the very sheet-anchor of his own entertainment, had been violently carried off from his kitchen, spit and all, by these honest gentlemen, who were now devouring it. Two others having carried off a sheep, were apprehended, and brought before a Justice of the Peace, who questioned them respecting the fact. The first denied he had taken the sheep, but said he had seen it taken away by a fellow with a red nose and a black wig—(this was the Justice's description)—'Don't you think he was like his honour, Tom?' he added, appealing to his comrade. 'By G—, Jack,' answered Tom, 'I believe it was the very man!' Erskine has been busy with these facetious gentlemen, and has sent several to prison, but nothing could have been done without the soldiery. We leave Lerwick at eight o'clock, and sleep on board the yacht.

"*9th August*, 1814.—Waked at seven, and find the vessel has left Lerwick harbour, and is on the point of entering the sound which divides the small island of Mousa (or Queen's island) from Coningsburgh, a very wild part of the main island so called. Went ashore, and see the very ancient castle of Mousa, which stands close on the sea-shore. It is a Pictish fortress, the most entire probably in the world. In form it resembles a dice-box, for the truncated cone is continued only to a certain height, after which it begins to rise perpendicularly, or rather with a tendency to expand outwards. The building is round, and has been surrounded with an outer-wall, of which hardly the slightest vestiges now remain. It is composed of a layer of stones, without cement; they are not of large size, but rather small and thin. To give a vulgar comparison, it resembles an old ruinous pigeon-house. Mr. Stevenson took the dimensions of this curious fort, which are as follows:—Outside diameter at the base is fifty-two feet; at the top thirty-eight feet. The diameter of the interior at the base is nineteen feet six inches; at the top twenty-one feet; the curve in the inside being the reverse of the outside, or nearly so. The thickness of the walls at the base seventeen feet; at the top eight feet six inches. The height outside forty-two feet; the inside thirty-four feet. The door or entrance faces the sea, and the interior is partly filled with rubbish. When you enter you see, in the inner wall, a succession of small openings like windows, directly one above another, with broad flat stones, serving for lintels; these are about nine inches thick. The whole resembles a ladder. There were four of these perpendicular rows of windows or apertures, the situation of which corresponds with the cardinal points of the compass. You enter the galleries contained in the thickness of the wall by two of these apertures, which have been broken down. These interior spaces are of two descriptions: one consists of a winding ascent, not quite an inclined plane, yet not by any means a regular stair; but the edges of the stones, being suffered to project irregularly, serve for rude steps—or a kind of assistance. Through this narrow staircase, which winds round the building, you creep up to the top of the castle, which is partly ruinous. But besides the staircase, there branch off at irregular intervals horizontal galleries, which go round the whole building, and receive air from the holes I formerly mentioned. These apertures vary in size, diminishing as they run, from about thirty inches in width by eighteen in height, till they are only about a foot square. The lower galleries are full man height, but narrow. They diminish both in height and width as they ascend, and as the thickness of the wall in which they are enclosed diminishes. The uppermost gallery is so narrow and low, that it was with great difficulty I crept through it. The walls are built very irregularly, the sweep of the cone being different on the different sides.

"It is said by Torfæus that this fort was repaired and strengthened by Erlind, who, having forcibly carried off the mother of Harold Earl of the Orkneys, resolved to defend himself to extremity in this place against the insulted Earl. How a castle could be defended which had no opening to the outside for shooting arrows, and which was of a capacity to be pulled to pieces by the assailants, who could advance without annoyance to the bottom of the wall (unless it were battlemented upon the top), does not easily appear. But to Erlind's operations the castle of Mousa possibly owes the upper and perpendicular, or rather overhanging, part of its elevation, and also its rude staircase. In these two particulars it seems to differ from all other Picts' castles, which are ascended by an inclined plane, and generally, I believe, terminate in a truncated cone, without that strange counterpart of the perpendicular or projecting part of the upper wall. Opposite to the castle of Mousa are the ruins of another Pictish fort: indeed, they all communicate with each other through the isles. The island of Mousa is the property of a Mr. Piper, who has improved it considerably, and values his castle. I advised him to clear out the interior, as he tells us there are three or four galleries beneath those now accessible, and the difference of height between the exterior and interior warrants his assertion.

"We get on board, and in time, for the wind freshens, and becomes contrary. We beat down to Sumburgh-head, through rough weather. This is the extreme south-eastern point of Zetland; and as the Atlantic and German oceans unite at this point, a frightful tide runs here, called Sumburgh-rost. The breeze, contending with the tide, flings the breakers in great style upon the high broken cliffs of Sumburgh-head. They are all one white foam, ascending to a great height. We wished to double this point, and lie by in a bay between that and the northern or north-western cape, called Fitful-head, and which seems higher than Sumburgh itself—and tacked repeatedly with this view; but a confounded islet, called *The Horse*, always baffled us, and, after three heats, fairly distanced us. So we run into a roadstead, called Quendal bay, on the south-eastern side, and there anchor for the night. We go ashore with various purposes—Stevenson to see the site of a proposed light-house on this tremendous cape—Marjoribanks to shoot rabbits—and Duff and I to look about us. I ascended the head by myself, which is lofty, and commands a wild sea-view. Zetland stretches away, with all its projecting capes and inlets, to the north-eastward. Many of those inlets approach each other very nearly; indeed, the two opposite bays at Sumburgh-head seem on the point of joining, and rendering that cape an island. The two creeks from those east and western seas are only divided by a low isthmus of blowing sand, and similar to that which wastes part of the east coast of Scotland. It has here blown like the deserts of Arabia, and destroyed some houses, formerly the occasional residences of the Earls of Orkney. The steep and rocky side of the cape, which faces the west, does not seem much more durable. These lofty cliffs are all of sand-flag, a very loose and perishable kind of rock, which slides down in immense masses, like avalanches, after every storm. The rest lies so loose, that, on the very brow of the loftiest crag, I had no difficulty in sending down a fragment as large as myself: he thundered down in tremendous style, but splitting upon a projecting cliff, descended into the ocean like a shower of shrapnel shot. The sea beneath rages incessantly among a thousand of the fragments which have fallen from the peaks, and which assume an hundred strange shapes. It would have been a fine situation to compose an ode to the Genius of Sumburgh-head, or an Elegy upon a Cormorant—or to have written and spoken madness of any kind in prose or poetry. But I gave vent to my excited feelings in a more simple way; and sitting gently down on the steep green slope which led to the beach, I e'en slid down a few hundred feet, and found the exercise quite an adequate vent to my enthusiasm. I recommend this exercise (time and place suiting) to all my brother scribblers, and I have no doubt it will save much effusion of Christian ink. Those slopes are covered with beautiful short herbage. At the foot of the ascent, and towards the isthmus, is the old house of Sumburgh, in appearance a most dreary mansion. I found, on my arrival at the beach, that the hospitality of the inhabitants had entrapped my companions. I walked back to meet them, but escaped the gin and water. On board about nine o'clock at night. A little schooner lies between us and the shore, which we had seen all day buffeting the tide and breeze like ourselves. The wind increases, and the ship is made SNUG—a sure sign the passengers will not be so.

10th August, 1814.—The omen was but too true—a terrible combustion on board, among plates, dishes, glasses, writing-desks, &c. &c.; not a wink of sleep. We weigh and stand out into that delightful current called *Sumburgh-rost* or *rust*. This tide certainly owes us a grudge, for it drove us to the eastward about thirty miles on the night of the first, and occasioned our missing the Fair Isle, and now it has caught us on our return. All the landsmen sicker than sick, and our Viceroy, Stevenson, qualmish. This is the only time that I have felt more than temporary inconvenience, but this morning I have headach and nausea; these are trifles, and in a well-found vessel, with a good pilot, we have none of that mixture of danger which gives dignity to the traveller. But he must have a stouter heart than mine, who can contemplate without horror the situation of a vessel of an inferior description caught among these headlands and reefs of rocks, in the long and dark winter nights of these regions. Accordingly, wrecks are frequent. It is proposed to have a light on Sumburgh-head, which is the first land made by vessels coming from the eastward; Fitful-head is higher, but is to the west, from which quarter few vessels come.

" We are now clear of Zetland, and about ten o'clock reach the Fair Isle;* one of their boats comes off, a strange-looking thing without an entire plank in it, excepting one on each side, upon the strength of which the whole depends, the rest being patched and joined. This trumpery skiff the men manage with the most astonishing dexterity, and row with remarkable speed; they have two banks, that is, two rowers on each bench, and use very short paddles. The wildness of their appearance, with long elf-locks, striped worsted caps, and shoes of raw hide—the fragility of their boat—and their extreme curiosity about us and our cutter, give them a title to be distinguished as *natives*. One of our people told their steersman, by way of jeer, that he must have great confidence in Providence to go to sea in such a vehicle; the man very sensibly replied, that without the same confidence he would not go to sea in the best *tool* in England. We take to our boat and row for about three miles round the coast, in order to land at the inhabited part of the island. This coast abounds with grand views of rocks and bays. One immense portion of rock is (like the Holm of Noss) separated by a chasm from the mainland. As it is covered with herbage on the top, though a literal precipice all round, the natives contrive to ascend the rock by a place which would make a goat dizzy, and then drag the sheep up by ropes, though they sometimes carry a sheep up on their shoulders. The captain of a sloop of war, being ashore while they were at this work, turned giddy and sick while looking at them. This immense precipice is several hundred feet high, and is perforated below, by some extraordinary apertures, through which a boat might pass; the light shines distinctly through these hideous chasms. After passing a square bay called the North-haven, tenanted by sea-fowl and seals (the first we have yet seen), we come in view of the small harbour. Land, and breakfast, for which, till now, none of us felt inclination. In front of the little harbour is the house of the tacksman, Mr. Strong, and in view are three small assemblages of miserable huts, where the inhabitants of the isle live. There are about thirty families and 250 inhabitants upon the *Fair Isle*. It merits its name, as the plain upon which the hamlets are situated bears excellent barley, oats, and potatoes, and the rest of the isle is beautiful pasture, excepting to the eastward, where there is a moss, equally essential to the comfort of the inhabitants, since it supplies them with peats for fuel. The Fair Isle is about three miles long and a mile and a half broad. Mr. Strong received us very courteously. He lives here, like Robinson Crusoe, in absolute solitude as to society, unless by a chance visit from the officers of a man-of-war. There is a signal-post maintained on the island by Government, under this gentleman's inspection; when any ship appears that cannot answer his signals, he sends off to Lerwick and Kirkwall to give the alarm. Rodgers[*] was off here last year, and nearly cut off one of Mr. Strong's express boats, but the active islanders outstripped his people by speed of rowing. The inhabitants pay Mr. Strong for the possessions which they occupy under him as subtenants, and cultivate the isle in their own way, *i. e.* by digging instead of ploughing (though the ground is quite open and free from rocks, and they have several scores of ponies.) and by raising alternate crops of barley, oats, and potatoes; the first and last are admirably good. They rather over-manure their crops; the possessions lie runrig, that is, by alternate ridges, and the outfield or pasture ground is possessed as common to all their cows and ponies. The islanders fish for Mr. Strong at certain fixed rates, and the fish is his property, which he sends to Kirkwall, Lerwick, or elsewhere, in a little schooner, the same which we left in Quendal bay, and about the arrival of which we found them anxious. An equal space of rich land on the Fair Isle, situated in an inland county of Scotland, would rent for £3000 a-year at the very least. To be sure it would not be burdened with the population of 250 souls, whose bodies (fertile as it is) it cannot maintain in bread, they being supplied chiefly from the mainland. Fish they have plenty, and are even nice in their choice. Skate they will not touch; dog-fish they say is only food for Orkney-men, and when they catch them, they make a point of tormenting the poor fish for eating off their baits from the hook, stealing the haddocks from their lines, and other enormities. These people, being about half-way between Shetland and Orkney, have unfrequent connexion with either archipelago, and live and marry entirely among themselves. One lad told me, only five persons had left the island since his remembrance, and of those, three were pressed for the navy. They seldom go to Greenland; but this year five or six of their young men were on board the whalers. They seemed extremely solicitous about their return, and repeatedly questioned us about the names of the whalers which were at Lerwick, a point on which we could give little information.

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* This is a solitary island, lying about half-way between Orkney and Zetland.

"The manners of these islanders seem primitive and simple, and they are sober, good-humoured, and friendly—but *jimp* honest. Their comforts are, of course, much dependent on *their master's* pleasure; for so they call Mr. Strong. But they gave him the highest character for kindness and liberality, and prayed to God he might long be their ruler. After mounting the signal-post hill, or Malcolm's Head, which is faced by a most tremendous cliff, we separated on our different routes. The sheriff went to rectify the only enormity on the island, which existed in the person of a drunken schoolmaster; Marchie* went to shoot sea-fowl, or rather to frighten them, as his calumniators allege. Stevenson and Duff went to inspect the remains or vestiges of a Danish lighthouse upon a distant hill, called, as usual, the Ward, or Ward-hill, and returned with specimens of copper ore. Hamilton went down to cater fish for our dinner and see it properly cooked—and I to see two remarkable indentures in the coast called *Rivas*, perhaps from their being rifted or *riven*. They are exactly like the Buller of Buchan, the sea rolling into a large open basin within the land through a natural arch-way. These places are close to each other—one is oblong, and it is easy to descend into it by a rude path; the other gulf is inaccessible from the land, unless to a *crags-man*, as these venturous climbers call themselves. I sat for about an hour upon the verge, like the cormorants around me, hanging my legs over the precipice; but I could not get free of two or three well-meaning islanders, who held me fast by the skirts all the time—for it must be conceived, that our numbers and appointments had drawn out the whole population to admire and attend us. After we separated, each, like the nucleus of a comet, had his own distinct train of attendants.—Visit the capital town, a wretched assemblage of the basest huts, dirty without, and still dirtier within; pigs, fowls, cows, men, women, and children, all living promiscuously under the same roof, and in the same room—the brood-sow making (among the more opulent) a distinguished inhabitant of the mansion. The compost, a liquid mass of utter abomination, is kept in a square pond of seven feet deep; when I censured it, they allowed it might be dangerous to the *bairns;* but appeared unconscious of any other objection. I cannot wonder they want meal, for assuredly they waste it. A great *bowie* or wooden vessel of porridge is made in the morning; a child comes and sups a few spoonfuls; then Mrs. Sow takes her share; then the rest of the children or the parents, and all at pleasure; then come the poultry when the mess is more cool; the rest is flung upon the dung-hill—and the goodwife wonders and complains when she wants meal in winter. They are a long-lived race, notwithstanding utter and inconceivable dirt and sluttery. A man of sixty told me his father died only last year, aged ninety-eight; nor was this considered as very unusual.

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[*] An American Commodore.

"The clergyman of Dunrossness, in Zetland, visits these poor people once a-year, for a week or two during summer. In winter this is impossible, and even the summer visit is occasionally interrupted for two years. Marriages and baptisms are performed, as one of the Isles-men told me, *by the slump*, and one of the children was old enough to tell the clergyman who sprinkled him with water, 'Deil be in your fingers.' Last time, four couple were married; sixteen children baptized. The schoolmaster reads a portion of Scripture in the church each Sunday, when the clergyman is absent; but the present man is unfit for this part of his duty. The women knit worsted stockings, night-caps, and similar trifles, which they exchange with any merchant vessels that approach their lonely isle. In these respects they greatly regret the American war; and mention with unction the happy days when they could get from an American trader a bottle of peach-brandy or rum in exchange for a pair of worsted stockings or a dozen of eggs. The humanity of their *master* interferes much with the favourite but dangerous occupation of the islanders, which is *fowling*, that is, taking the young sea-fowl from their nests among these tremendous crags. About a fortnight before we arrived, a fine boy of fourteen had dropped from the cliff, while in prosecution of this amusement, into a roaring surf, by which he was instantly swallowed up. The unfortunate mother was labouring at the peat-moss at a little distance. These accidents do not, however, strike terror into the survivors. They regard the death of an individual engaged in these desperate exploits, as we do the fate of a brave relation who falls in battle, when the honour of his death furnishes a balm to our sorrow. It, therefore, requires all the tacksman's authority to prevent a practice so pregnant with danger. Like all other precarious and dangerous employments the occupation of the crags-men renders them unwilling to labour at employments of a more steady description. The Fair Isle inhabitants are a good-looking race, more like Zetlanders than Orkney-men. Evenson, and other names of a Norwegian or Danish derivation, attest their Scandinavian descent. Return and dine at Mr. Strong's, having sent our cookery ashore, not to overburthen his hospitality. In this place, and perhaps in the very cottage now inhabited by Mr. Strong, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, Commander-in-Chief of the Invincible Armada, wintered, after losing his vessel to the eastward of the island. It was not till he had spent some weeks in this miserable abode, that he got off to Norway. Independently of the moral consideration, that, from the pitch of power in which he stood a few days before, the proudest peer of the proudest nation in Europe found himself dependent on the jealous and scanty charity of these secluded islanders, it is scarce possible not to reflect with compassion on the change of situation from the palaces of Estremadura to the hamlet of the Fair Isle—

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* Mr. Marjoribanks.

> 'Dost thou think on thy deserts, son of Hodeirah?
> Dost thou long for the gale of Arabia?'

"Mr. Strong gave me a curious old chair belonging to Quendale, a former proprietor of the Fair Isle, and which a more zealous antiquary would have dubbed 'the Duke's chair.' I will have it refitted for Abbotsford, however. About eight o'clock we take boat, amid the cheers of the inhabitants, whose minds, subdued by our splendour, had been secured by our munificence, which consisted in a moderate benefaction of whisky and tobacco, and a few shillings laid out on their staple commodities. They agreed no such day had been seen in the isle. The signal-post displayed its flags, and to recompense these distinguished marks of honour, we hung out our colours, stood into the bay, and saluted with three guns,

> 'Echoing from a thousand caves,'

and then bear away for Orkney, leaving, if our vanity does not deceive us, a very favourable impression on the mind of the inhabitants of the Fair Isle. The tradition of the Fair Isle is unfavourable to those shipwrecked strangers, who are said to have committed several acts of violence to extort the supplies of provision, given them sparingly and with reluctance by the islanders, who were probably themselves very far from being well supplied.

"I omitted to say we were attended in the morning by two very sportive whales, but of a kind, as some of our crew who had been on board Greenland-men assured us, which it was very dangerous to attack. There were two Gravesend smacks fishing off the isle. Lord, what a long draught London makes!

"*11th August*, 1814.—After a sound sleep to make amends for last night, we find, at awaking, the vessel off the Start of Sanda, the first land in the Orkneys which we could make. There a light-house has been erected lately upon the best construction. Landed and surveyed it. All in excellent order, and the establishment of the keepers in the same style of comfort and respectability as elsewhere, far better than the house of the master of the Fair Isle, and rivalling my own baronial mansion of Abbotsford. Go to the top of the tower and survey the island, which, as the name implies, is level, flat, and sandy, quite the reverse of those in Zetland: it is intersected by creeks and small lakes, and though it abounds with shell marle, seems barren. There is one dreadful inconvenience of an island life, of which we had here an instance. The keeper's wife had an infant in her arms—her first-born, too, of which the poor woman had been delivered without assistance. Erskine told us of a horrid instance of malice which had been practised in this island of Sanda. A decent tenant, during the course of three or four successive years, lost to the number of twenty-five cattle, stabbed as they lay in their fold by some abominable wretch. What made the matter stranger was, that the poor man could not recollect any reason why he should have had the ill-will of a single being, only that in taking up names for the *militia*, a duty imposed upon him by the Justices, he thought he might possibly have given some unknown offence. The villain was never discovered.

"The wrecks on this coast were numerous before the erection of the light-house. It was not uncommon to see five or six vessels on shore at once. The goods and chattels of the inhabitants are all said to savour of *Flotsome* and *Jetsome*, as the floating wreck and that which is driven ashore are severally called. Mr. Stevenson happened to observe that the boat of a Sanda farmer had bad sails—'If it had been His (*i. e.* God's) will that you hadna built sae many light-houses hereabout'—answered the Orcadian, with great composure—'I would have had new sails last winter.' Thus do they talk and think upon these subjects; and so talking and thinking, I fear the poor mariner has little chance of any very anxious attempt to assist him. There is one wreck, a Danish vessel, now aground under our lee. These Danes are the stupidest seamen, by all accounts, that sail the sea. When this light upon the Start of Sanda was established, the Commissioners, with laudable anxiety to extend its utility, had its description and bearings translated into Danish and sent to Copenhagen. But they never attend to such trifles. The Norwegians are much better liked, as a clever, hardy, sensible people. I forgot to notice there was a Norwegian prize lying in the Sound of Lerwick, sent in by one of our cruisers. This was a queer-looking, half-decked vessel, all tattered and torn and shaken to pieces, looking like Coleridge's Spectre Ship. It was pitiable to see such a prize. Our servants went aboard, and got one of their loaves, and gave a dreadful account of its composition. I got and cut a crust of it; it was rye-bread, with a slight mixture of pine-fir bark or sawings of deal. It was not good, but (as Charles XII. said) might be eaten. But after all, if the people can be satisfied with such bread as this, it seems hard to interdict it to them. What would a Londoner say if, instead of his roll and muffins, this black bread, relishing of tar and turpentine, were presented for his breakfast? I would to God there could be a Jehovah-jireh, 'a ram caught in the thicket,' to prevent the sacrifice of that people.

"The few friends who may see this Journal are much indebted for these pathetic remarks to the situation under which they are recorded; for since we left the lighthouse we have been struggling with adverse wind (pretty high too), and a very strong tide, called the Rost of the Start, which, like Sumburgh Rost, bodes no good to our roast and boiled. The worst is that this struggle carries us past a most curious spectacle, being no less than the carcasses of two hundred and sixty-five whales, which have been driven ashore in Taftsness bay, now lying close under us. With all the inclination in the world, it is impossible to stand in close enough to verify this massacre of Leviathans with our own eyes, as we do not care to run the risk of being drawn ashore ourselves among the party. In fact, this species of spectacle has been of late years very common among the isles. Mr. Stevenson saw upwards of a hundred and fifty whales lying upon the shore in a bay at Unst, in his northward trip. They are not large, but are decided whales, measuring perhaps from fifteen to twenty-five feet. They are easily mastered, for the first that is wounded among the sounds and straits so common in the isles, usually runs ashore. The rest follow the blood, and, urged on by the boats behind, run ashore also. A cut with one of the long whaling knives under the back-fin, is usually fatal to these huge animals. The two hundred and sixty-five whales now lying within two or three miles of us were driven ashore by seven boats only.

"*Five o'clock.*—We are out of the *Rost* (I detest that word), and driving fast through a long sound among low green islands, which hardly lift themselves above the sea—not a cliff nor a hill to be seen—what a contrast to the land we have left! We are standing for some creek or harbour, called Lingholm-bay, to lie to or anchor for the night; for to pursue our course by night, and that a thick one, among these isles, and islets, and sand-banks, is out of the question—clear moonlight might do. Our sea is now moderate. But oh, gods and men, what misfortunes have travellers to record! Just as the quiet of the elements had reconciled us to the thought of dinner, we learn that an unlucky sea has found its way into the galley during the last infernal combustion, when the lee-side and bolt-sprit were constantly under water; so our soup is poisoned with salt water—our cod and haddocks, which cost ninepence this blessed morning, and would have been worth a couple of guineas in London, are soused in their primitive element—the curry is undone—and all gone to the devil. We all apply ourselves to comfort our Lord High Admiral Hamilton, whose despair for himself and the public might edify a patriot. His good humour—which has hitherto defied every incident, aggravated even by the gout—supported by a few bad puns, and a great many fair promises on the part of the steward and cook, fortunately restores his equilibrium.

"*Eight o'clock.*—Our supplemental dinner proved excellent, and we have glided into an admirable roadstead or harbour, called Lingholm bay, formed by the small island of Lingholm embracing a small basin dividing that islet from the larger isle of Stronsay. Both, as well as Sanda, Eda, and others, which we have passed, are low, green, and sandy. I have seen nothing to-day worth marking, except the sporting of a very large whale at some distance, and H.'s face at the news of the disaster in the cook-room. We are to weigh at two in the morning, and hope to reach Kirkwall, the capital of Orkney, by breakfast to-morrow. I trust there are no *rusts* or *rosts* in the road. I shall detest that word even when used to signify verd-antique or patina in the one sense, or roast venison in the other. Orkney shall begin a new volume of these exquisite memoranda.

Omission.—At Lerwick the Dutch fishers had again appeared on their old haunts. A very interesting meeting took place between them and the Lerwegians, most of them being old acquaintances. They seemed very poor, and talked of having been pillaged of every thing by the French, and expected to have found Lerwick ruined by the war. They have all the careful, quiet, and economical habits of their country, and go on board their busses with the utmost haste so soon as they see the Greenland sailors, who usually insult and pick quarrels with them. The great amusement of the Dutch sailors is to hire the little ponies, and ride up and down with them. On one occasion, a good many years ago, an English sailor interrupted this cavalcade, frightened the horses, and one or two Dutchmen got tumbles. Incensed at this beyond their usual moderation, they pursued the cause of their overthrow, and wounded him with one of their knives. The wounded man went on board his vessel, the crew of which, about fifty strong, came ashore with their long flinching-knives with which they cut up the whales, and falling upon the Dutchmen, though twice their numbers, drove them all into the sea, where such as could not swim were in some risk of being drowned. The instance of aggression, or rather violent retaliation, on their part, is almost solitary. In general they are extremely quiet, and employ themselves in bartering their little merchandise of gin and ginger-bread for Zetland hose and night-caps."

CHAPTER XXIX.

DIARY ON BOARD THE LIGHT-HOUSE YACHT CONTINUED—THE ORKNEYS—KIRKWALL—HOY—THE STANDING STONES OF STENNIS, &c.—AUGUST, 1814.

"*August* 12*th*, 1814.—With a good breeze and calm sea we weighed at two in the morning, and worked by short tacks up to Kirkwall bay, and find ourselves in that fine basin upon rising in the morning. The town looks well from the sea, but is chiefly indebted to the huge old cathedral that rises out of the centre. Upon landing we find it but a poor and dirty place, especially towards the harbour. Farther up the town are seen some decent old-fashioned houses, and the Sheriff's interest secures us good lodgings. Marchie goes out to hunt for a pointer. The morning, which was rainy, clears up pleasantly, and Hamilton, Erskine, Duff, and I, walk to Malcolm Laing's, who has a pleasant house about half a mile from the town. Our old acquaintance, though an invalid, received us kindly; he looks very poorly, and cannot walk without assistance, but seems to retain all the quick, earnest, and vivacious intelligence of his character and manner. After this, visit the antiquities of the place, viz.: the Bishop's palace, the Earl of Orkney's castle, and the cathedral, all situated within a stonecast of each other. The two former are ruinous. The most prominent part of the ruins of the Bishop's palace is a large round tower, similar to that of Bothwell in architecture, but not equal to it in size. This was built by Bishop Reid, *tempore Jacobi V.*, and there is a rude statue of him in a niche in the front. At the north-east corner of the building is a square tower of greater antiquity, called the Mense or Mass Tower; but, as well as a second and smaller round tower, it is quite ruinous. A suite of apartments of different sizes fill up the space between these towers, all now ruinous. The building is said to have been of great antiquity, but was certainly in a great measure re-edified in the sixteenth century. Fronting this castle or palace of the Bishop, and about a gun-shot distant, is that of the Earl of Orkney. The Earl's palace was built by Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney, the same who erected that of Scalloway, in Shetland. It is an elegant structure, partaking at once of the character of a palace and castle. The building forms three sides of an oblong square, but one of the sides extends considerably beyond the others. The great hall must have been remarkably handsome, opening into two or three huge rounds or turrets, the lower part of which is divided by stone shafts into three windows. It has two immense chimneys, the arches or lintels of which are formed by a flat arch, as at Crichton Castle. There is another very handsome apartment communicating with the hall like a modern drawing-room, and which has, like the former, its projecting turrets. The hall is lighted by a fine gothic-shafted window at one end, and by others on the sides. It is approached by a spacious and elegant staircase of three flights of steps. The dimensions may be sixty feet long, twenty broad, and fourteen high, but doubtless an arched roof sprung from the side walls, so that fourteen feet was only the height from the ground to the arches. Any modern architect, wishing to emulate the real gothic architecture, and apply it to the purposes of modern splendour, might derive excellent hints from this room. The exterior ornaments are also extremely elegant. The ruins, once the residence of this haughty and oppressive Earl, are now so disgustingly nasty, that it required all the zeal of an antiquary to prosecute the above investigation. Architecture seems to have been Earl Patrick's prevailing taste. Besides this castle and that of Scalloway, he added to or enlarged the old castle of Bressay. To accomplish these objects, he oppressed the people with severities unheard of even in that oppressive age, drew down on himself a shameful though deserved punishment, and left these dishonoured ruins to hand down to posterity the tale of his crimes and of his fall. We may adopt, though in another sense, his own presumptuous motto—*Sic Fuit, Est, et Erit.*

"We visit the cathedral, dedicated to St. Magnus, which greeted the sheriff's approach with a merry peal. Like that of Glasgow, this church has escaped the blind fury of Reformation. It was founded in 1138, by Ronald, Earl of Orkney, nephew of the Saint. It is of great size, being 260 feet long, or thereabout, and supported by twenty-eight Saxon pillars, of good workmanship. The round arch predominates in the building, but I think not exclusively. The steeple (once a very high spire) rises upon four pillars of great strength, which occupy each angle of the nave. Being destroyed by lightning, it was rebuilt upon a low and curtailed plan. The appearance of the building is rather massive and gloomy than elegant, and many of the exterior ornaments, carving around the door-ways, &c., have been injured by time. We entered the cathedral, the whole of which is kept locked, swept, and in good order, although only the eastern end is used for divine worship. We walked some time in the nave and western end, which is left unoccupied, and has a very solemn effect as the avenue to the place of worship. There were many tombstones on the floor and elsewhere, some, doubtless, of high antiquity. One, I remarked, had the shield of arms hung by the corner, with a helmet above it of a large proportion, such as I have seen on the most ancient seals. But we had neither time nor skill to decipher what noble Orcadian lay beneath. The church is as well fitted up as could be expected; much of the old carved oak remains, but with a motley mixture of modern deal pews. All, however, is neat and clean, and does great honour to the kirk-session who maintain its decency. I remarked particularly Earl Patrick's seat, adjoining to that of the magistrates, but surmounting it and every other in the church; it is surrounded with a carved screen of oak, rather elegant, and bears his arms and initials, and the motto I have noticed. He bears the royal arms without any mark of bastardy (his father was a natural son of James V.) quarterly, with a lymphad or galley, the ancient arms of the county. This circumstance was charged against him on his trial.* I understand the late Mr. Gilbert Laing Meason left the interest of £1000 to keep up this cathedral.

"There are in the street facing the cathedral the ruins of a much more ancient castle; a proper feudal fortress belonging to the Earls of Orkney, but called the

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* "This noted oppressor was finally brought to trial, and beheaded at the Cross of Edinburgh [6th February, 1614.] It is said that the King's mood was considerably heated against him by some ill-chosen and worse written Latin inscriptions with which his father and himself had been unlucky enough to decorate some of their insular palaces. In one of these, Earl Robert, the father, had given his own designation thus:—'Orcadiæ Comes *Rex* Jacobi quinti filius.' In this case he was not, perhaps, guilty of any thing worse than bad Latin. But James VI. who had a keen nose for puzzling out treason, and with whom an assault and battery upon Priscian ranked in nearly the same degree of crime, had little doubt that the use of the nominative *Rex*, instead of the genitive *Regis*, had a treasonable savour."—SCOTT'S *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xxiii. p. 232.

King's Castle. It appears to have been very strong, being situated near the harbour, and having, as appears from the fragments, very massive walls. While the wicked Earl Patrick was in confinement, one of his natural sons defended this castle to extremity against the King's troops, and only surrendered when it was nearly a heap of ruins, and then under condition he should not be brought in evidence against his father.

"We dine at the inn, and drink the Prince Regent's health, being that of the day—Mr. Baikie of Tankerness dines with us.

"*August* 13, 1814.—A bad morning, but clears up. No letters from Edinburgh. The country about Kirkwall is flat, and tolerably cultivated. We see oxen generally wrought in the small country carts, though they have a race of ponies, like those of Shetland, but larger. Marchie goes to shoot on a hill called Whiteford, which slopes away about two or three miles from Kirkwall. The grouse is abundant, for the gentleman who chaperons Marchie killed thirteen brace and a half, with a snipe. There are no partridges nor hares. The soil of Orkney is better, and its air more genial than Shetland; but it is far less interesting, and possesses none of the wild and peculiar character of the more northern archipelago. All vegetables grow here freely in the gardens, and there are one or two attempts at trees where they are sheltered by walls. How ill they succeed may be conjectured from our bringing with us a quantity of brushwood, commissioned by Malcolm Laing from Aberbrothock, to be sticks to his pease. This trash we brought two hundred miles. I have little to add, except that the Orkney people have some odd superstitions about a stone on which they take oaths to Odin. Lovers often perform this ceremony in pledge of mutual faith, and are said to account it a sacred engagement. It is agreed that we go on board after dinner, and sail with the next tide. The magistrates of Kirkwall present us with the freedom of their ancient burgh; and Erskine, instead of being cumbered with drunken sailors, as at Lerwick, or a drunken school-master, as at Fair Isle, is annoyed by his own substitute. This will occasion his remaining two days at Kirkwall, during which time it is proposed we shall visit the light-house upon the dangerous rocks called the Skerries, in the Pentland Firth; and then, returning to the eastern side of Pomona, take up the counsellor at Stromness. It is further settled that we leave Marchie with Erskine to get another day's shooting. On board at ten o'clock, after a little bustle in expediting our domestics, washerwomen, &c.

"*August* 14*th*, 1814.—Sail about four, and in rounding the main land of Orkney, called Pomona, encounter a very heavy sea; about ten o'clock, get into the Sound of Holm or Ham, a fine smooth current meandering away between two low green islands, which have little to characterise them. On the right of the Sound is the mainland, and a deep bay called Scalpa Flow indents it up to within two miles of Kirkwall. A canal through this neck of the island would be of great consequence to the burgh. We see the steeple and church of Kirkwall across the island very distinctly. Getting out of the Sound of Holm, we stand into the harbour or roadstead of Widewall, where we find seven or eight foreign vessels bound for Ireland, and a sloop belonging to the light-house service. These roadsteads are common all through the Orkneys, and afford excellent shelter for small vessels. The day is pleasant and sunny, but the breeze is too high to permit landing at the Skerries. Agree, therefore, to stand over for the mainland of Scotland, and visit Thurso. Enter the Pentland Frith, so celebrated for the strength and fury of its tides, which is boiling even in this pleasant weather; we see a large ship battling with this heavy current, and, though with all her canvas set and a breeze, getting more and more involved. See the two Capes of Dungsby or Duncansby, and Dunnet-head, between which lies the celebrated John o'Groat's house, on the north-eastern extremity of Scotland. The shores of Caithness rise bold and rocky before us, a contrast to the Orkneys, which are all low, excepting the Island of Hoy. On Duncansby-head appear some remarkable rocks, like towers, called the stacks of Duncansby; near this shore runs the remarkable breaking tide called the *Merry Men of Mey*, whence Mackenzie takes the scenery of a poem—

'Where the dancing men of Mey,
Speed the current to the land.'

Here, according to his locality, the Caithness man witnessed the vision, in which was introduced the song translated by Gray, under the title of the Fatal Sisters.

On this subject, Mr. Baikie told me the following remarkable circumstance:—A clergyman told him that while some remnants of the Norse were yet spoken in North Ronaldsha, he carried thither the translation of Mr. Gray, then newly published, and read it to some of the old people as referring to the ancient history of their islands. But so soon as he had proceeded a little way, they exclaimed they knew it very well in the original, and had often sung it to himself when he asked them for an old Norse song; they called it *The Enchantresses.* The breeze dies away between two wicked little islands called Swona and Stroma, the latter belonging to Caithness, the former to Orkney. *Nota Bene.*—The inhabitants of the rest of the Orcades despise those of Swona for eating limpets, as being the last of human meannesses. Every land has its fashions. The Fair-Isles-men disdain Orkney-men for eating dog-fish. Both islands have dangerous reefs and whirlpools, where, even in this fine day, the tide rages furiously. Indeed, the large high unbroken billows, which at every swell hide from our deck each distant object, plainly intimate what a dreadful current this must be when vexed by high or adverse winds. Finding ourselves losing ground in the tide, and unwilling to waste time, we give up Thurso—run back into the roadstead or bay of Long-Hope, and anchor under the fort. The bay has four entrances and safe anchorage in most winds, and having become a great rendezvous for shipping (there are nine vessels lying here at present), has been an object of attention with Government.

"Went ashore after dinner, and visited the fort, which is only partly completed; it is a *flèche* to the sea, with eight guns, twenty-four pounders, but without any land defences; the guns are mounted *en barbette*, without embrasures, each upon a kind of movable stage, which stage wheeling upon a pivot in front, and traversing by means of wheels behind, can be pointed in any direction that may be thought necessary. Upon this stage, the gun-carriage moves forward and recoils, and the depth of the parapet shelters the men even better than an embrasure; at a little distance from this battery they are building a Martello tower, which is to cross the fire of the battery, and also that of another projected tower upon the opposite point of the bay. The expedience of these Towers seems excessively problematical. Supposing them impregnable, or nearly so, a garrison of fourteen or fifteen men may be always blockaded by a very trifling number, while the enemy dispose of all in the vicinity at their pleasure. In the case of Long-Hope, for instance, a frigate might disembark 100 men, take the fort in the rear, where it is undefended even by a palisade, destroy the magazines, spike and dismount the cannon, carry off or cut out any vessels in the roadstead, and accomplish all the purposes that could bring them to so remote a spot, in spite of a serjeant's party in the Martello tower, and without troubling themselves about them at all. Meanwhile, Long-Hope will one day turn out a flourishing place; there will soon be taverns and slop-shops, where sailors rendezvous in such numbers; then will come quays, docks, and warehouses; and then a thriving town. Amen, so be it. This is the first fine day we have enjoyed to an end since Sunday, 31st ult. Rainy, cold, and hazy, have been our voyages around these wild islands; I hope the weather begins to mend, though Mr. Wilson, our master, threatens a breeze to-morrow. We are to attempt the Skerries, if possible; if not, we will, I believe, go to Stromness.

"*August* 15*th*, 1814.—Fine morning; we get again into the Pentland Frith, and with the aid of a pilot-boat belonging to the light-house service, from South Ronaldshaw, we attempt the Skerries. Notwithstanding the fair weather, we have a specimen of the violence of the flood-tide, which forms whirlpools on the shallow sunken rocks by the islands of Swona and Stroma, and in the deep water makes strange, smooth, whirling, and swelling eddies, called by the sailors, *wells.* We run through the *wells of Tuftile* in particular, which, in the least stress of weather, wheel a large ship round and round, without respect either to helm or sails. Hence the distinction of *wells* and *waves* in old English; the *well* being that smooth, glassy, oily-looking eddy, the force of which seems to the eye almost resistless. The bursting of the waves in foam around these strange eddies has a bewildering and confused appearance, which it is impossible to describe. Get off the Skerries about ten o'clock, and land easily; it is the first time a boat has got there for several days. The *Skerries** is an island about 60 acres, of fine short herbage, belonging to Lord Dundas; it is surrounded by a reef of precipitous rocks, not very high, but inaccessible, unless where the ocean has made ravines among them, and where stairs have been cut down to the water for the light-house service. Those inlets have a romantic appearance, and have been christened by the sailors, the Parliament House, the Seals' Lying-in-Hospital, &c. The last inlet, after rushing through a deep chasm, which is open overhead, is continued under ground, and then again opens to the sky in the middle of the island: in this hole the seals bring out their whelps; when the tide is high, the waves rise up through this aperture in the middle of the isle—like the blowing of the whale in noise and appearance. There is another round cauldron of solid rock, to which the waves have access through a natural arch in the rock, having another and lesser arch rising just above it; in hard weather, the waves rush through both apertures with a horrid noise; the workmen called it the Carron Blast, and indeed, the variety of noises, which issued from the abyss, somewhat reminded me of that engine. Take my rifle and walk round the cliffs in search of seals, but see none, and only disturb the digestion of certain aldermen-cormorants, who were sitting on the points of the crags after a good fish breakfast; only made one good shot out of four. The light-house is too low, and on the old construction, yet it is of the last importance. The keeper is an old man-of-war's-man, of whom Mr. Stevenson observed that he was a great swearer when he first came; but after a year or two's residence in this solitary abode, became a changed man. There are about fifty head of cattle on the island; they must be got in and off with great danger and difficulty. There is no water upon the isle, except what remains after rain in some pools; these sometimes dry in summer, and the cattle are reduced to great straits. Leave the isle about one; and the wind and tide being favourable, crowd all sail, and get on at the rate of fourteen miles an hour. Soon reach our old anchorage at the Long-hope, and passing, stand to the north-westward, up the Sound of Hoy for Stromness.

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* "A Skerrie means a flattish rock which the sea does not overflow."—*Edmondstone's View of the Zetlands.*

"I should have mentioned, that in going down the Pentland Firth this morning, we saw Johnnie Groat's House, or rather the place where it stood, now occupied by a store-house. Our pilot opines there was no such man as Johnnie Groat, for, he says, he cannot hear that any body *ever saw him*. This reasoning would put down most facts of antiquity; they gather shells on the shore called *Johnnie Groat's buckies*, but I cannot procure any at present. I may also add, that the interpretation given to *wells* may apply to the *Wells of Slain*, in the fine ballad of Clerk Colvin; such eddies in the romantic vicinity of Slains Castle would be a fine place for a mermaid.

"Our wind fails us, and what is worse, becomes westerly; the Sound has now the appearance of a fine land-locked bay, the passages between the several islands being scarce visible. We have a superb view of Kirkwall Cathedral, with a strong gleam of sunshine. Gloomy weather begins to collect around us, particularly on the island of Hoy, which, covered with gloom and vapour, now assumes a majestic mountainous character. On Pomona we pass the Hill of Orphir, which reminds me of the clergyman of that parish, who was called to account for some of his inaccuracies to the General Assembly; one charge he held particularly cheap, viz., that of drunkenness. "Reverend Moderator," said he, in reply, "I *do* drink, as other gentlemen do." This Orphir of the north must not be confounded with the Ophir of the south. From the latter came gold, silver, and precious stones; the former seems to produce little except peats. Yet these are precious commodities, which some of the Orkney Isles altogether want, and lay waste and burn the turf of their land instead of importing coal from Newcastle. The Orcadians seem by no means an alert or active race; they neglect the excellent fisheries which lie under their very noses, and in their mode of managing their boats, as well as in the general tone of urbanity and intelligence, are excelled by the less favoured Zetlanders. I observe they always crowd their boat with people in the bows, being the ready way to send her down in any awkward circumstance. There are remains of their Norwegian descent and language in North Ronaldshaw, an isle I regret we did not see. A missionary preacher came ashore there a year or two since, but being a very little black-bearded unshaved man, the seniors of the isle suspected him of being an ancient Pecht or Pict, and *no canny*, of course. The schoolmaster came down to entreat our worthy Mr. Stevenson, then about to leave the island, to come up and verify whether the preacher was an ancient Pecht, yea or no. Finding apologies were in vain, he rode up to the house where the unfortunate preacher, after three nights' watching, had got to bed, little conceiving under what odious suspicion he had fallen. As Mr. S. declined disturbing him, his boots were produced, which being a *little—little—very little* pair, confirmed, in the opinion of all the bystanders, the suspicion of Pechtism. Mr. S. therefore found it necessary to go into the poor man's sleeping apartment, where he recognized one Campbell, heretofore an ironmonger in Edinburgh, but who had put his hand, for some years to the missionary plough; of course he warranted his quondam acquaintance to be no ancient Pecht. Mr. Stevenson carried the same schoolmaster who figured in the adventure of the Pecht to the mainland of Scotland, to be examined for his office. He was extremely desirous to see a tree; and, on seeing one, desired to know what *girss* it was that grew on the top on't—the leaves appearing to him to be grass. They still speak a little Norse, and indeed I hear every day words of that language; for instance, *Ja kul*, for '*Yes, sir.*' We creep slowly up Hoy Sound, working under the Pomona shore; but there is no hope of reaching Stromness till we have the assistance of the evening tide. The channel now seems like a Highland loch; not the least ripple on the waves. The passage is narrowed, and (to the eye) blocked up by the interposition of the green and apparently fertile isle of Græmsay, the property of Lord Armadale.* Hoy looks yet grander, from comparing its black and steep mountains with this verdant isle. To add to the beauty of the Sound, it is rendered lively by the successive appearance of seven or eight whaling vessels from Davies' Straits; large strong ships, which pass successively, with all their sails set, enjoying the little wind that is. Many of these vessels display the *garland*; that is, a wreath of ribands which the young fellows on board have got from their sweethearts, or come by otherwise, and which hangs between the foremast and mainmast, surmounted sometimes by a small model of the vessel. This garland is hung up upon the 1st May, and remains till they come into port. I believe we shall dodge here till the tide makes about nine, and then get into Stromness; no boatman or sailor in Orkney thinks of the wind in comparison of the tides and currents. We must not complain, though the night gets rainy, and the Hill of Hoy is now completely enveloped with vapour and mist. In the forepart of the day we executed very cleverly a task of considerable difficulty and even danger.

"16*th August*, 1814.—Get into Stromness bay, and anchor before the party are up. A most decided rain all night. The bay is formed by a deep indention in the mainland, or Pomona; on one side of which stands Stromness—a fishing village and harbour of *call* for the Davies' Straits whalers, as Lerwick is for the Greenlanders. Betwixt the vessels we met yesterday, seven or eight which passed us this morning, and several others still lying in the bay, we have seen between twenty and thirty of these large ships in this remote place. The opposite side of Stromness bay is protected by Hoy, and Græmsay lies between them; so that the bay seems quite land-locked, and the contrast between the mountains of Hoy, the soft verdure of Græmsay, and the swelling hill of Orphir on the mainland, has a beautiful effect. The day clears up, and Mr. Rae, Lord Armadale's factor, comes off from his house, called Clestrom, upon the shore opposite to Stromness, to breakfast with us. We go ashore with him. His farm is well cultivated, and he has procured an excellent breed of horses from Lanarkshire, of which country he is a native; strong hardy Galloways, fit for labour or hacks. By this we profited, as Mr. Rae mounted us all, and we set off to visit the Standing Stones of Stenhouse or Stennis.

"At the upper end of the bay, about half-way between Clestrom and Stromness, there extends a loch of considerable size, of fresh water, but communicating with the sea by apertures left in a long bridge or causeway which divides them. After riding about two miles along this lake, we open another called the Loch of Harray, of about the same dimensions, and communicating with the lower lake, as the former does with the sea, by a stream, over which is constructed a causeway, with openings to suffer the flow and reflux of the water, as both lakes are affected by the tide. Upon the tongues of land which, approaching each other, divide the lakes of Stennis and Harray, are situated the Standing Stones. The isthmus on the eastern side exhibits a semicircle of immensely large upright pillars of unhewn stone, surrounded by a mound of earth. As the mound is discontinued, it does not seem that the circle was ever completed. The flat or open part of the semicircle looks up a plain, where, at a distance, is seen a large tumulus. The highest of these stones may be about sixteen or seventeen feet, and I think there are none so low as twelve feet. At irregular distances are pointed out other unhewn pillars of the same kind. One, a little to the westward, is perforated with a round hole, perhaps to bind a victim; or rather, I conjecture, for the purpose of solemnly attesting the deity, which the Scandinavians did by passing their head through a ring,—*vide* Eyrbiggia Saga. Several barrows are scattered around this strange monument. Upon the opposite isthmus is a complete circle, of ninety-five paces in diameter, surrounded by standing stones, less in size than the others, being only from ten or twelve to fourteen feet in height, and four in breadth. A deep trench is drawn around this circle on the outside of the pillars, and four tumuli, or mounds of earth, are regularly placed, two on each side.

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* The late Sir William Honeyman, Bart.—a Judge of the Court of Sessions by the title of Lord Armadale.

"Stonehenge excels these monuments, but I fancy they are otherwise unparalleled in Britain. The idea that such circles were exclusively Druidical is now justly exploded. The northern nations all used such erections to mark their places of meeting, whether for religious purposes or civil policy; and there is repeated mention of them in the Sagas. *See* the Eyrbiggia Saga, for the establishment of the Helga-fels, or holy mount, where the people held their Comitia, and where sacrifices were offered to Thor and Woden. About the centre of the semicircle is a broad flat stone, probably once the altar on which human victims were sacrificed.—Mr. Rae seems to think the common people have no tradition of the purpose of these stones, but probably he has not enquired particularly. He admits they look upon them with superstitious reverence; and it is evident that those which have fallen down (about half the original number) have been wasted by time, and not demolished. The materials of these monuments lay near, for the shores and bottom of the lake are of the same kind of rock. How they were raised, transported, and placed upright, is a puzzling question. In our ride back, noticed a round entrenchment, or *tumulus*, called the Hollow of Tongue.

"The hospitality of Mrs. Rae detained us to an early dinner at Clestrom. About four o'clock took our long-boat and rowed down the bay to visit the Dwarfie Stone of Hoy. We have all day been pleased with the romantic appearance of that island, for though the Hill of Hoy is not very high, perhaps about 1200 feet, yet rising perpendicularly (almost) from the sea, and being very steep and furrowed with ravines, and catching all the mists from the western ocean, it has a noble and picturesque effect in every point of view. We land upon the island, and proceed up a long and very swampy valley broken into peat-bogs. The one side of this valley is formed by the Mountain of Hoy, the other by another steep hill, having at the top a circular belt of rock; upon the slope of this last hill, and just where the principal mountain opens into a wide and precipitous and circular *corrie* or hollow, lies the Dwarfie Stone. It is a huge sandstone rock, of one solid stone, being about seven feet high, twenty-two feet long, and seventeen feet broad. The upper end of this stone is hewn into a sort of apartment containing two beds of stone and a passage between them. The uppermost and largest is five feet eight inches long, by two feet broad, and is furnished with a stone pillow. The lower, supposed for the Dwarf's Wife, is shorter, and rounded off, instead of being square at the corners. The entrance may be about three feet and a-half square. Before it lies a huge stone, apparently intended to serve the purpose of a door, and shaped accordingly. In the top, over the passage which divides the beds, there is a hole to serve for a window or chimney, which was doubtless originally wrought square with irons, like the rest of the work, but has been broken out by violence into a shapeless hole. Opposite to this stone, and proceeding from it in a line down the valley, are several small barrows, and there is a very large one on the same line, at the spot where we landed. This seems to indicate that the monument is of heathen times, and probably was meant as the temple of some northern edition of the *Dii Manes*. There are no symbols of Christian devotion—and the door is to the westward; it therefore does not seem to have been the abode of a hermit, as Dr. Barry* has conjectured. The Orcadians have no tradition on the subject, excepting that they believe it to be the work of a dwarf, to whom, like their ancestors, they attribute supernatural powers and malevolent disposition. They conceive he may be seen sometimes sitting at the door of his abode, but he vanishes on a nearer approach. Whoever inhabited this den, certainly enjoyed

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* History of the Orkney Islands, by the Rev. George Barry, D. D. 4to. Edinburgh: 1805.

'Pillow cold and sheets not warm.'

"Duff, Stevenson, and I now walk along the skirts of the Hill of Hoy, to rejoin Robert Hamilton, who in the meanwhile had rode down to the clergyman's house, the wet and boggy walk not suiting his gout. Arrive at the manse completely wet, and drink tea there. The clergyman (Mr. Hamilton) has procured some curious specimens of natural history for Bullock's Museum, particularly a pair of fine eaglets. He has just got another of the golden, or white kind, which he intends to send him. The eagle, with every other ravenous bird, abounds among the almost inaccessible precipices of Hoy, which afford them shelter, while the moors, abounding with grouse, and the small uninhabited islands and holms, where sheep and lambs are necessarily left unwatched, as well as the all-sustaining ocean, give these birds of prey the means of support. The clergyman told us, that a man was very lately alive in the Island of , who, when an infant, was transported from thence by an eagle over a broad sound, or arm of the sea, to the bird's nest in Hoy. Pursuit being instantly made, and the eagle's nest being known, the infant was found there playing with the young eaglets. A more ludicrous instance of transportation he himself witnessed. Walking in the fields, he heard the squeaking of a pig for some time, without being able to discern whence it proceeded, until looking up, he beheld the unfortunate grunter in the talons of an eagle, who soared away with him towards the summit of Hoy. From this it may be conjectured, that the island is very thinly inhabited. In fact, we only saw two or three little wigwams. After tea we walked a mile farther, to a point where the boat was lying, in order to secure the advantage of the flood-tide. We rowed with toil across one stream of tide, which set strongly up between Græmsay and Hoy; but, on turning the point of Græmsay, the other branch of the same flood-tide carried us with great velocity alongside our yacht, which we reached about nine o'clock. Between riding, walking, and running, we have spent a very active and entertaining day.

"*Domestic Memoranda.*—The eggs on Zetland and Orkney are very indifferent, having an earthy taste and being very small. But the hogs are an excellent breed—queer wild-looking creatures, with heads like wild-boars, but making capital bacon."

CHAPTER XXX.

DIARY CONTINUED—STROMNESS—BESSIE MILLIE'S CHARM—CAPE WRATH—CAVE OF SMOWE—THE HEBRIDES—SCALPA, ETC.—1814.

"*Off Stromness*, 17*th August*, 1814.—Went on shore after breakfast, and found W. Erskine and Marjoribanks had been in this town all last night, without our hearing of them or they of us. No letters from Abbotsford or Edinburgh. Stromness is a little dirty straggling town, which cannot be traversed by a cart, or even by a horse, for there are stairs up and down, even in the principal streets. We paraded its whole length like turkeys in a string, I suppose to satisfy ourselves that there was a worse town in the Orkneys than the metropolis, Kirkwall. We clomb, by steep and dirty lanes, an eminence rising above the town, and commanding a fine view. An old hag lives in a wretched cabin on this height, and subsists by selling winds. Each captain of a merchantman, between jest and earnest, gives the old woman sixpence, and she boils her kettle to procure a favourable gale. She was a miserable figure; upwards of ninety, she told us, and dried up like a mummy. A sort of clay-coloured cloak, folded over her head, corresponded in colour to her corpselike complexion. Fine light-blue eyes, and nose and chin that almost met, and a ghastly expression of cunning, gave her quite the effect of Hecate. She told us she remembered *Gow the pirate*, who was born near the House of Clestrom, and afterwards commenced buccanier. He came to his native country about 1725, with a *snow* which he commanded, carried off two women from one of the islands, and committed other enormities. At length, while he was dining in a house in the Island of Eda, the islanders, headed by Malcolm Laing's grandfather, made him prisoner and sent him to London, where he was hanged. While at Stromness, he made love to a Miss Gordon, who pledged her faith to him by shaking hands, an engagement, which, in her idea, could not be dissolved without her going to London to seek back again her 'faith and troth,' by shaking hands with him again after execution. We left our Pythoness, who assured us there was nothing evil in the intercession she was to make for us, but that we were only to have a fair wind through the benefit of her prayers. She repeated a sort of rigmarole which I suppose she had ready for such occasions, and seemed greatly delighted and surprised with the amount of our donation, as every body gave her a trifle, our faithful Captain Wilson making the regular offering on behalf of the ship. So much for buying a wind. Bessy Millie's habitation is airy enough for Æolus himself, but if she is a special favourite with that divinity, he has a strange choice. In her house I remarked a quern or hand-mill. A cairn, a little higher, commands a beautiful view of the bay, with its various entrances and islets. Here we found the vestiges of a bonfire, lighted in memory of the battle of Bannockburn, concerning which every part of Scotland has its peculiar traditions. The Orcadians say that a Norwegian prince, then their ruler, called by them Harold, brought 1400 men of Orkney to the assistance of Bruce, and that the King, at a critical period of the engagement, touched him with his scabbard, saying, 'The day is against us.'—'I trust,' returned the Orcadian, 'your Grace will *venture again*;' which has given rise to their motto, and passed into a proverb. On board at half-past three, and find Bessy Millie a woman of her word, for the expected breeze has sprung up, if it but last us till we double Cape Wrath. Weigh anchor (I hope) to bid farewell to Orkney.*

"The land in Orkney is, generally speaking, excellent, and what is not fitted for the plough, is admirably adapted for pasture. But the cultivation is very bad, and the mode of using these extensive commons, where they tear up, without remorse, the turf of the finest pasture, in order to make fuel, is absolutely execrable. The practice has already peeled and exhausted much fine land, and must in the end ruin the country entirely. In other respects, their mode of cultivation is to manure for barley and oats, and then manure again, and this without the least idea of fallow or green crops. Mr. Rae thinks that his example—and he farms very well—has had no effect upon the natives, except in the article of potatoes, which they now cultivate a little more, but crops of turnips are unknown. For this slovenly labour the Orcadians cannot, like the Shetland men, plead the occupation of fishing, which is wholly neglected by them, excepting that about this time of the year all the people turn out for the dogfish; the liver of which affords oil, and the bodies are a food as much valued here by the lower classes as it is contemned in Zetland. We saw nineteen boats out at this work. But cod, tusk, ling, haddocks, &c., which abound round these isles, are totally neglected. Their inferiority in husbandry is therefore to be ascribed to the prejudices of the people, who are all peasants of the lowest order. On Lord Armadale's estate, the number of tenantry amounts to 300, and the average rent is about seven pounds each. What can be expected from such a distribution; and how is the necessary restriction to take place, without the greatest immediate distress and hardship to these poor creatures? It is the hardest chapter in Economicks; and if I were an Orcadian laird, I feel I should shuffle on with the old useless creatures, in contradiction to my better judgment. Stock is improved in these islands, and the horses seem to be better bred than in Shetland; at least, I have seen more clever animals. The good horses find a ready sale; Mr. Rae gets twenty guineas readily for a colt of his rearing—to be sure, they are very good.

"*Six o'clock.*—Our breeze has carried us through the Mouth of Hoy, and so into the Atlantic. The north-western face of the island forms a ledge of high perpendicular cliffs, which might have surprised us more, had we not already seen the Ord of Bressay, the Noup of Noss, and the precipices of the Fair Isle. But these are formidable enough. One projecting cliff, from the peculiarities of its form, has acquired the name of the Old Man of Hoy, and is well known to mariners as marking the entrance to the Mouth. The other jaw of this mouth is formed by a lower range of crags, called the Burgh of Birsa. The access through this strait would be easy, were it not for the Island of Græmsay, lying in the very throat of the passage, and two other islands covering the entrance to the harbour of Stromness. Græmsay is infamous for shipwrecks, and the chance of these *God-sends*, as they were impiously called, is said sometimes to have doubled the value of the land. In Stromness, I saw many of the sad relics of shipwrecked vessels applied to very odd purposes, and indeed to all sorts of occasions. The gates, or *grinds*, as they are here called, are usually of ship planks and timbers, and so are their bridges, &c. These casualties are now much less common since the lights on the Skerries and the Start have been established. Enough of memoranda for the present. We have hitherto kept our course pretty well; and a King's ship about eighteen guns or so, two miles upon our lea-boom, has shortened sail, apparently to take us under her wing, which may not be altogether unnecessary in the latitude of Cape Wrath, where several vessels have been taken by Yankee-Doodle. The sloop-of-war looks as if she could bite hard, and is supposed by our folks to be the Malay. If we can speak the captain we will invite him to some grouse, or send him some, as he likes best, for Marchie's campaign was very successful.

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* Lord Teignmouth, in his recent "Sketches of the Coasts and Islands of Scotland," says—"The publication of the Pirate satisfied the natives of Orkney as to the authorship of the Waverley Novels. It was remarked by those who had accompanied Sir Walter Scott in his excursions in these Islands that the vivid descriptions which the work contains were confined to those scenes which he visited."—Vol. i. p. 28.

"18*th August*, 1814.—Bessy Millie's charm has failed us. After a rainy night, the wind has come round to the north-west, and is getting almost contrary. We have weathered Whitten-head, however, and Cape Wrath, the north-western extremity of Britain, is now in sight. The weather gets rainy and squally. Hamilton and Erskine keep their berths. Duff and I sit upon deck, like two great bears, wrapt in watch-cloaks, the sea flying over us every now and then. At length, after a sound buffeting with the rain, the doubling Cape Wrath with this wind is renounced as impracticable, and we stand away for Loch Eribol, a lake running into the extensive country of Lord Reay. No sickness; we begin to get hardy sailors in that particular. The ground rises upon us very bold and mountainous, especially a very high steep mountain, called Ben-y-Hope, at the head of a lake called Loch Hope. The weather begins to mitigate as we get under the lea of the land. Loch Eribol opens, running up into a wild and barren scene of crags and hills. The proper anchorage is said to be at the head of the lake, but to go eight miles up so narrow an inlet would expose us to be wind-bound. A pilot-boat comes off from Mr. Anderson's house, a principal tacksman of Lord Reay's. After some discussion we anchor within a reef of sunken rocks, nearly opposite to Mr. Anderson's house of Rispan; the situation is not, we are given to understand, altogether without danger if the wind should blow hard, but it is now calm. In front of our anchorage a few shapeless patches of land, not exceeding a few yards in diameter. have been prepared for corn by the spade, and bear wretched crops. All the rest of the view is utter barrenness; the distant hills, we are told, contain plenty of deer, being part of a forest belonging to Lord Reay, who is proprietor of all the extensive range of desolation now under our eye. The water has been kinder than the land, for we hear of plenty of salmon, and haddocks, and lobsters, and send our faithful minister of the interior, John Peters, the steward, to procure some of those good things of this very indifferent land, and to invite Mr. Anderson to dine with us. Four o'clock,—John has just returned, successful in both commissions, and the evening concludes pleasantly.

"19*th August*, 1814, *Loch Eribol, near Cape Wrath*.—Went off before eight A. M. to breakfast with our friend Mr. Anderson. His house, invisible from the vessel at her moorings, and, indeed, from any part of the entrance into Loch Eribol, is a very comfortable one, lying obscured behind a craggy eminence. A little creek, winding up behind the crag, and in front of the house, forms a small harbour, and gives a romantic air of concealment and snugness. There we found a ship upon the stocks, built from the keel by a Highland carpenter, who had magnanimously declined receiving assistance from any of the ship-carpenters who happened to be here occasionally, lest it should be said he could not have finished his task without their aid. An ample Highland breakfast of excellent new-taken herring, equal to those of Lochfine, fresh haddocks, fresh eggs, and fresh butter, not forgetting the bottle of whisky, and bannocks of barley and oat-cakes, with the Lowland luxuries of tea and coffee. After breakfast, took the long-boat, and under Mr. Anderson's pilotage, row to see a remarkable natural curiosity, called Uamh Smowe, or the Largest Cave. Stevenson, Marchie, and Duff, go by land. Take the fowling-piece and shoot some sea-fowl, and a large hawk of an uncommon appearance. Fire four shots, and kill three times. After rowing about three miles to the westward of the entrance from the sea to Loch Eribol, we enter a creek, between two ledges of very high rocks, and landing, find ourselves in front of the wonder we came to see. The exterior apartment of the cavern opens under a tremendous rock, facing the creek, and occupies the full space of the ravine where we landed. From the top of the rock to the base of the cavern, as we afterwards discovered by plumb, is eighty feet, of which the height of the arch is fifty-three feet; the rest, being twenty-seven feet, is occupied by the precipitous rock under which it opens; the width is fully in proportion to this great height, being 110 feet. The depth of this exterior cavern is 200 feet, and it is apparently supported by an intermediate column of natural rock. Being open to daylight and the sea air, the cavern is perfectly clean and dry, and the sides are incrusted with stalactites. This immense cavern is so well-proportioned, that I was not aware of its extraordinary height and extent, till I saw our two friends, who had somewhat preceded us, having made the journey by land, appearing like pigmies among its recesses. Afterwards, on entering the cave, I climbed up a sloping rock at its extremity, and was much struck with the prospect, looking outward from this magnificent arched cavern upon our boat and its crew, the view being otherwise bounded by the ledge of rocks which formed each side of the creek. We now propose to investigate the farther wonders of the cave of Smowe. In the right or west side of the cave opens an interior cavern of a different aspect. The height of this second passage may be about twelve or fourteen feet, and its breadth about six or eight, neatly formed into a gothic portal by the hand of nature. The lower part of this porch is closed by a ledge of rock, rising to the height of between five and six feet, and which I can compare to nothing but the hatch-door of a shop. Beneath this hatch a brook finds its way out, forms a black deep pool before the Gothic archway, and then escapes to the sea, and forms the creek in which we landed. It is somewhat difficult to approach this strange pass, so as to gain a view into the interior of the cavern. By clambering along a broken and dangerous cliff, you can, however, look into it; but only so far as to see a twilight space filled with dark-coloured water in great agitation, and representing a subterranean lake, moved by some fearful convulsion of nature. How this pond is supplied with water you cannot see from even this point of vantage, but you are made partly sensible of the truth by a sound like the dashing of a sullen cataract within the bowels of the earth. Here the adventure has usually been abandoned, and Mr. Anderson only mentioned two travellers whose curiosity had led them farther. We were resolved, however, to see the adventure of this new cave of Montestnos to an end. Duff had already secured the use of a fisher's boat and its hands, our own log-boat being too heavy and far too valuable to be ventured upon this Cocytus. Accordingly the skiff was dragged up the brook to the rocky ledge or hatch which barred up the interior cavern, and there, by force of hands, our boat's crew and two or three fishers first raised the boat's bow upon the ledge of rock, then brought her to a level, being poised upon that narrow hatch, and lastly launched her down into the dark and deep subterranean lake within. The entrance was so narrow, and the boat so clumsy, that we, who were all this while clinging to the rock like sea-fowl, and with scarce more secure footing, were greatly alarmed for the safety of our trusty sailors. At the instant when the boat sloped inward to the cave, a Highlander threw himself into it with great boldness and dexterity, and, at the expense of some bruises, shared its precipitate fall into the waters under the earth. This dangerous exploit was to prevent the boat drifting away from us, but a cord at its stern would have been a safer and surer expedient.

"When our *enfant perdu* had recovered breath and legs, he brought the boat back to the entrance, and took us in. We now found ourselves embarked on a deep black pond of an irregular form, the rocks rising like a dome all around us, and high over our heads. The light, a sort of dubious twilight, was derived from two chasms in the roof of the vault, for that offered by the entrance was but trifling. Down one of those rents there poured from the height of eighty feet, in a sheet of foam, the brook, which, after supplying the subterranean pond with water, finds its way out beneath the ledge of rock that blocks its entrance. The other skylight, if I may so term it, looks out at the clear blue sky. It is impossible for description to explain the impression made by so strange a place, to which we had been conveyed with so much difficulty. The cave itself, the pool, the cataract, would have been each separate objects of wonder, but all united together, and affecting at once the ear, the eye, and the imagination, their effect is indescribable. The length of this pond, or loch, as the people here call it, is seventy feet over, the breadth about thirty at the narrowest point, and it is of great depth.

"As we resolved to proceed, we directed the boat to a natural arch on the right hand, or west side of the cataract. This archway was double, a high arch being placed above a very low one, as in a Roman aqueduct. The ledge of rock which forms this lower arch is not above two feet and a half high above the water, and under this we were to pass in the boat; so that we were fain to pile ourselves flat upon each other like a layer of herrings. By this judicious disposition we were pushed in safety beneath this low-browed rock into a region of utter darkness. For this, however, we were provided, for we had a tinder-box and lights. The view back upon the twilight lake we had crossed, its sudden eddies wheeling round and round, and its echoes resounding to the ceaseless thunder of the waterfall, seemed dismal enough, and was aggravated by temporary darkness, and in some degree by a sense of danger. The lights, however, dispelled the latter sensation, if it prevailed to any extent, and we now found ourselves in a narrow cavern, sloping somewhat upward from the water. We got out of the boat, proceeded along some slippery places upon shelves of the rock, and gained the dry land. I cannot say *dry*, excepting comparatively. We were then in an arched cave, twelve feet high in the roof, and about eight feet in breadth, which went winding into the bowels of the earth for about an hundred feet. The sides, being (like those of the whole cavern) of limestone rock, were covered with stalactites, and with small drops of water like dew, glancing like ten thousand thousand sets of birth-day diamonds under the glare of our lights. In some places these stalactites branch out into broad and curious ramifications, resembling coral and the foliage of submarine plants.

"When we reached the extremity of this passage, we found it declined suddenly to a horrible ugly gulf, or well, filled with dark water, and of great depth, over which the rock closed. We threw in stones, which indicated great profundity by their sound; and growing more familiar with the horrors of this den, we sounded with an oar, and found about ten feet depth at the entrance, but discovered, in the same manner, that the gulf extended over the rock, deepening as it went, God knows how far. Imagination can figure few deaths more horrible than to be sucked under these rocks into some unfathomable abyss, where your corpse could never be found to give intimation of your fate. A water kelpy, or an evil spirit of any aquatic propensities, could not choose a fitter abode; and, to say the truth, I believe at our first entrance, and when all our feelings were afloat at the novelty of the scene, the unexpected plashing of a seal would have routed the whole dozen of us. The mouth of this ugly gulf was all covered with slimy alluvious substances, which led Mr. Stevenson to observe, that it could have no separate source, but must be fed from the waters of the outer lake and brook, as it lay upon the same level, and seemed to rise and fall with them, without having any thing to indicate a separate current of its own. Rounding this perilous hole, or gulf, upon the aforesaid alluvious substances, which formed its shores, we reached the extremity of the cavern, which there ascends like a vent, or funnel, directly up a sloping precipice, but hideously black, and slippery from wet and sea-weeds. One of our sailors, a Zetlander, climbed up a good way, and by holding up a light, we could plainly perceive that this vent closed after ascending to a considerable height; and here, therefore, closed the adventure of the cave of Smowe, for it appeared utterly impossible to proceed further in any direction whatever. There is a tradition, that the first Lord Reay went through various subterranean abysses, and at length returned, after ineffectually endeavouring to penetrate to the extremity of the Smowe cave; but this must be either fabulous, or an exaggerated account of such a journey as we performed. And under the latter supposition, it is a curious instance how little the people in the neighbourhood of this curiosity have cared to examine it.

"In returning, we endeavoured to familiarize ourselves with the objects in detail, which, viewed together, had struck us with so much wonder. The stalactites, or limy incrustations, upon the walls of the cavern, are chiefly of a dark-brown colour, and in this respect, Smowe is inferior, according to Mr. Stevenson, to the celebrated cave of Macallister in the Isle of Skye. In returning, the men with the lights, and the various groups and attitudes of the party, gave a good deal of amusement. We now ventured to clamber along the side of the rock above the subterranean water, and thus gained the upper arch, and had the satisfaction to see our admirable and good-humoured commodore, Hamilton, floated beneath the lower arch into the second cavern. His goodly countenance being illumined by a single candle, his recumbent posture, and the appearance of a hard-favoured fellow guiding the boat, made him the very picture of Bibo, in the catch, when he wakes in Charon's boat:

> 'When Bibo thought fit from this world to retreat,
> As full of Champagne as an egg's full of meat,
> He waked in the boat, and to Charon he said,
> That he would be row'd back, for he was not yet dead.'

"Descending from our superior station on the upper arch we now again embarked, and spent some time in rowing about and examining this second cave. We could see our dusky entrance, into which daylight streamed faint, and at a considerable distance; and under the arch of the outer cavern stood a sailor, with an oar in his hand, looking, in the perspective, like a fairy with his wand. We at length emerged unwillingly from this extraordinary basin, and again enjoyed ourselves in the large exterior cave. Our boat was hoisted with some difficulty over the ledge, which appears the natural barrier of the interior apartments, and restored in safety to the fishers, who were properly gratified for the hazard which their skiff, as well as one of themselves, had endured. After this we resolved to ascend the rocks, and discover the opening by which the cascade was discharged from above into the second cave. Erskine and I, by some chance, took the wrong side of the rocks, and, after some scrambling, got into the face of a dangerous precipice, where Erskine, to my great alarm, turned giddy, and declared he could not go farther. I clambered up without much difficulty, and shouting to the people below, got two of them to assist the Counsellor, who was brought into, by the means which have sent many a good fellow out of, the world—I mean a rope. We easily found the brook, and traced its descent till it precipitates itself down a chasm of the rock into the subterranean apartment, where we first made its acquaintance. Divided by a natural arch of stone from the chasm down which the cascade falls, there is another rent, which serves as a skylight to the cavern, as I already noticed. Standing on a natural foot-bridge, formed by the arch which divides these two gulfs, you have a grand prospect into both. The one is deep, black, and silent, only affording at the bottom a glimpse of the dark and sullen pool which occupies the interior of the cavern. The right-hand rent, down which the stream discharges itself, seems to ring and reel with the unceasing roar of the cataract which envelopes its side in mist and foam. This part of the scene alone is worth a day's journey. After heavy rains, the torrent is discharged into this cavern with astonishing violence; and the size of the chasm being inadequate to the reception of such a volume of water, it is thrown up in spouts like the blowing of a whale. But at such times the entrance of the cavern is inaccessible.

"Taking leave of this scene with regret, we rowed back to Loch Eribol. Having yet an hour to spare before dinner, we rowed across the mouth of the lake to its shore on the east side. This rises into a steep and shattered stack of mouldering calcareous rock and stone, called Whiten Head. It is pierced with several caverns, the abode of seals and cormorants. We entered one, where our guide promised to us a grand sight, and so it certainly would have been to any who had not just come from Smowe. In this last cave the sea enters through a lofty arch, and penetrates to a great depth; but the weight of the tide made it dangerous to venture very far, so we did not see the extremity of Friskin's Cavern, as it is called. We shot several cormorants in the cave, the echoes roaring like thunder at every discharge. We received, however, a proper rebuke from Hamilton, our commodore, for killing any thing which was not fit for *eating*. It was in vain I assured him that the Zetlanders make excellent hare-soup out of these sea-fowl. He will listen to no subordinate authority, and rules us by the Almanach des Gourmands. Mr. Anderson showed me the spot where the Norwegian monarch, Haco, moored his fleet, after the discomfiture he received at Largs. He caused all the cattle to be driven from the hills, and houghed and slain upon a broad flat rock, for the refreshment of his dispirited army. Mr. Anderson dines with us, and very handsomely presents us with a stock of salmon, haddocks, and so forth, which we requite by a small present of wine from our sea stores. This has been a fine day; the first fair day here for these eight weeks.

"*20th August*, 1814.—Sail by four in the morning, and by half-past six, are off Cape Wrath. All hands ashore by seven, and no time allowed to breakfast, except on beef and biscuit. On this dread Cape, so fatal to mariners, it is proposed to build a light-house, and Mr. Stevenson has fixed on an advantageous situation. It is a high promontory, with steep sides that go sheer down to the breakers, which lash its feet. There is no landing, except in a small creek about a mile and a half to the eastward. There the foam of the sea plays at long bowls with a huge collection of large stones, some of them a ton in weight, but which these fearful billows chuck up and down as a child tosses a ball. The walk from thence to the Cape was over rough boggy ground, but good sheep pasture. Mr. —— Dunlop, brother to the laird of Dunlop, took from Lord Reay, some years since, a large track of sheep-land, including the territories of Cape Wrath, for about £300 a-year, for the period of two-nineteen years and a life-rent. It is needless to say, that the tenant has an immense profit, for the value of pasture is now understood here. Lord Reay's estate, containing 150,000 square acres, and measuring eighty miles by sixty, was, before commencement of the last leases, rented at £1,200 a-year. It is now worth £5,000, and Mr. Anderson says he may let it this ensuing year (when the leases expire) for about £15,000. But then he must resolve to part with his people, for these rents can only be given upon the supposition that sheep are generally to be introduced on the property. In an economical, and perhaps in a political point of view, it might be best that every part of a country were dedicated to that sort of occupation for which nature has best fitted it. But to effect this reform in the present instance, Lord Reay must turn out several hundred families who have lived under him and his fathers for many generations, and the swords of whose fathers probably won the lands from which he is now expelling them. He is a good-natured man, I suppose, for Mr. A. says he is hesitating whether he shall not take a more moderate rise (£7000 or £8000), and keep his Highland tenantry. This last war (before the short peace), he levied a fine fencible corps (the Reay fencibles), and might have doubled their number. *Wealth* is no doubt *strength* in a country, while all is quiet and governed by law, but on any altercation or internal commotion, it ceases to be strength, and is only the means of tempting the strong to plunder the possessors. Much may be said on both sides.*

"Cape Wrath is a striking point, both from the dignity of its own appearance, and from the mental association of its being the extreme cape of Scotland, with reference to the north-west. There is no land in the direct line between this point and America. I saw a pair of large eagles, and if I had had the rifle-gun might have had a shot, for the birds, when I first saw them, were perched on a rock within about sixty or seventy yards. They are, I suppose, little disturbed here, for they showed no great alarm. After the Commissioners and Mr. Stevenson had examined the headland, with reference to the site of a light-house, we strolled to our boat, and came on board between ten and eleven. Get the boat up upon deck, and set sail for the Lewis with light winds and a great swell of tide. Pass a rocky islet called Gousla. Here a fine vessel was lately wrecked; all her crew perished but one, who got upon the rocks from the boltsprit, and was afterwards brought off. In front of Cape Wrath are some angry breakers, called the *Staggs*; the rocks which occasion them are visible at low water. The country behind Cape Wrath swells in high sweeping elevations, but without any picturesque or dignified mountainous scenery. But on sailing westward a few miles, particularly after doubling a headland called the Stour of Assint, the coast assumes the true Highland character, being skirted with a succession of picturesque mountains of every variety of height and outline. These are the hills of Ross-shire—a waste and thinly-peopled district at this extremity of the island. We would willingly have learned the names of the most remarkable, but they are only laid down in the charts by the cant names given them by mariners, from their appearance, as the

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* The whole of the immense district called *Lord Reay's country*—the habitation as far back as history reaches of the clan Mackay—has passed, since Sir W. Scott's journal was written, into the hands of the noble family of Sutherland.

Sugar-loaf, and so forth. Our breeze now increases, and seems steadily favourable, carrying us on with exhilarating rapidity, at the rate of eight knots an hour, with the romantic outline of the mainland under our lee-beam, and the dusky shores of the Long Island beginning to appear ahead. We remain on deck long after it is dark, watching the phosphoric effects occasioned, or made visible, by the rapid motion of the vessel, and enlightening her course with a continued succession of sparks and even flashes of broad light, mingled with the foam which she flings from her bows and head. A rizard haddock and to bed. Charming weather all day.

"*21st August*, 1814.—Last night went out like a lamb, but this morning came in like a lion, all roar and tumult. The wind shifted and became squally; the mingled and confused tides that run among the Hebrides got us among their eddies, and gave the cutter such concussions, that, besides reeling at every wave, she trembled from head to stern, with a sort of very uncomfortable and ominous vibration. Turned out about three, and went on deck; the prospect dreary enough, as we are beating up a narrow channel between two dark and disconsolate-looking islands, in a gale of wind and rain, guided only by the twinkling glimmer of the light on an island called Ellan Glas.—Go to bed and sleep soundly, notwithstanding the rough rocking. Great bustle about four; the light-keeper having seen our flag, comes off to be our pilot, as in duty bound. Asleep again till eight. When I went on deck, I found we had anchored in the little harbour of Scalpa, upon the coast of Harris, a place dignified by the residence of Charles Edward in his hazardous attempt to escape in 1746. An old man, lately alive here, called Donald Macleod, was his host and temporary protector, and could not, until his dying hour, mention the distresses of the Adventurer without tears. From this place, Charles attempted to go to Stornoway; but the people of the Lewis had taken arms to secure him, under an idea that he was coming to plunder the country. And although his faithful attendant, Donald Macleod, induced them, by fair words, to lay aside their purpose, yet they insisted upon his leaving the island. So the unfortunate Prince was obliged to return back to Scalpa. He afterwards escaped to South Uist, but was chased in the passage by Captain Fergusson's sloop of war. The harbour seems a little neat secure place of anchorage. Within a small island, there seems more shelter than where we are lying; but it is crowded with vessels, part of those whom we saw in the Long Hope—so Mr. Wilson chose to remain outside. The ground looks hilly and barren in the extreme; but I can say little for it, as an incessant rain prevents my keeping the deck. Stevenson and Duff, accompanied by Marchie, go to examine the light-house on Ellan Glas. Hamilton and Erskine keep their beds, having scarce slept last night—and I bring up my journal. The day continues bad, with little intermission of rain. Our party return with little advantage from their expedition, excepting some fresh butter from the light-house. The harbour of Scalpa is composed of a great number of little uninhabited islets. The masts of the vessels at anchor behind them have a good effect. To bed early, to make amends for last night, with the purpose of sailing for Dunvegan in the Isle of Skye with daylight."

CHAPTER XXXI.

DIARY CONTINUED—ISLE OF HARRIS—MONUMENTS OF THE CHIEFS OF MACLEOD—ISLE OF SKYE—DUNVEGAN CASTLE—LOCH CORRISKIN—MACALLISTER'S CAVE.—1814.

"*August 22d*, 1814.—Sailed early in the morning from Scalpa Harbour, in order to cross the Minch, or Channel, for Dunvegan; but the breeze being contrary, we can only creep along the Harris shore, until we shall gain the advantage of the tide. The east coast of Harris, as we now see it, is of a character which sets human industry at utter defiance, consisting of high sterile hills, covered entirely with stones, with a very slight sprinkling of stunted heather. Within, appear still higher peaks of mountains. I have never seen any thing more unpropitious, excepting the southern side of Griban, on the shores of Loch-na-Gaoil, in the Isle of Mull. We sail along this desolate coast (which exhibits no mark of human habitation) with the advantage of a pleasant day, and a brisk, though not a favourable gale. *Two o'clock*—Row ashore to see the little harbour and village of Rowdill, on the coast of Harris. There is a decent three-storied house, belonging to the laird, Mr. Macleod of the Harris, where we were told two of his female relations lived. A large vessel had been stranded last year, and two or three carpenters were about repairing her, but in such a style of Highland laziness that I suppose she may float next century. The harbour is neat enough, but wants a little more cover to the eastward. The ground, on landing, does not seem altogether so desolate as from the sea. In the former point of view, we overlook all the retired glens and crevices which, by infinite address and labour, are rendered capable of a little cultivation. But few and evil are the patches so cultivated in Harris, as far as we have seen. Above the house is situated the ancient church of Rowdill. This pile was unfortunately burned down by accident some years since, by fire taking to a quantity of wood laid in for fitting up. It is a building in the form of a cross, with a rude tower at the eastern end, like some old English churches. Upon this tower are certain pieces of sculpture, of a kind the last which one would have expected on a building dedicated to religious purposes. Some have lately fallen in a storm, but enough remains to astonish us at the grossness of the architect and the age.

"Within the church are two ancient monuments. The first, on the right hand of the pulpit, presents the effigy of a warrior completely armed in plate armour, with his hand on his two-handed broadsword. His helmet is packed, with a gorget or upper corslet which seems to be made of mail. His figure lies flat on the monument, and is in bas relief, of the natural size. The arch which surmounts this monument is curiously carved with the figures of the apostles. In the flat space of the wall beneath the arch, and above the tomb-stone, are a variety of compartments, exhibiting the arms of the Macleods, being a galley with the sails spread, a rude view of Dunvegan Castle, some saints and religious emblems, and a Latin inscription, of which our time, (or skill) was inadequate to decypher the first line; but the others announced the tenant of the monument to be *Alexander, filius Willielmi MacLeod, de Dunvegan, Anno Dni* M.CCCC.XXVIII. A much older monument (said also to represent a Laird of Macleod) lies in the transept, but without any arch over it. It represents the grim figure of a Highland chief, not in feudal armour like the former, but dressed in a plaid—(or perhaps a shirt of mail)—reaching down below the knees, with a broad sort of hem upon its lower extremity. The figure wears a high-peaked open helmet, or scull-cap, with a sort of tippet of mail attached to it, which falls over the breast of the warrior, pretty much as women wear a handkerchief or short shawl. This remarkable figure is bearded most tyrannically, and has one hand on his long two-handed sword, the other on his dirk, both of which hang at a broad belt. Another weapon, probably his knife, seems to have been also attached to the baldric. His feet rest on his two dogs entwined together, and a similar emblem is said to have supported his head, but is now defaced, as indeed the whole monument bears marks of the unfortunate fire. A lion is placed at each end of the stone. Who the hero was whom this martial monument commemorated, we could not learn. Indeed, our Cicerone was but imperfect. He chanced to be a poor devil of an excise-officer, who had lately made a seizure of a still upon a neighbouring island, after a desperate resistance. Upon seeing our cutter, he mistook it, as has often happened to us, for an armed vessel belonging to the revenue, which the appearance and equipment of the yacht, and the number of men, make her resemble considerably. He was much disappointed when he found we had nothing to do with the tribute to Cæsar, and begged us not to undeceive the natives, who were so much irritated against him that he found it necessary to wear a loaded pair of pistols in each pocket, which he showed to our Master, Wilson, to convince him of the perilous state in which he found himself while exercising so obnoxious a duty in the midst of a fierce-tempered people, and at many miles distance from any possible countenance or assistance. The village of Rowdill consists of Highland huts of the common construction, *i. e.* a low circular wall of large stones, without mortar, deeply sunk in the ground, surmounted by a thatched roof secured by ropes, without any chimney but a hole in the roof. There may be forty such houses in the village. We heard that the laird was procuring a schoolmaster

—he of the parish being ten miles distant—and there was a neatness about the large house which seems to indicate that things are going on well. Adjacent to the churchyard were two eminences, apparently artificial. Upon one was fixed a stone, seemingly the staff of a cross; upon another the head of a cross, with a sculpture of the crucifixion. These monuments (which refer themselves to Catholic times of course) are popularly called, *The Croshlets*—crosslets, or little crosses.

"Get on board at five, and stand across the Sound for Skye with the ebb-tide in our favour. The sunset being delightful, we enjoy it upon deck, admiring the Sound on each side bounded by islands. That of Skye lies in the east, with some very high mountains in the centre, and a bold rocky coast in front, opening up into several lochs, or arms of the sea;—that of Loch Folliart, near the upper end of which Dunvegan is situated, is opposite to us, but our breeze has failed us, and the flood-tide will soon set in, which is likely to carry us to the northward of this object of our curiosity until next morning. To the west of us lies Harris, with its variegated ridges of mountains, now clear, distinct, and free from clouds. The sun is just setting behind the Island of Bernera, of which we see one conical hill. North Uist and Benbecula continue from Harris to the southerly line of what is called the Long Island. They are as bold and mountainous, and probably as barren as Harris—worse they cannot be. Unnumbered islets and holms, each of which has its name and its history, skirt these larger isles, and are visible in this clear evening as distinct and separate objects, lying lone and quiet upon the face of the undisturbed and scarce-rippling sea. To our berths at ten, after admiring the scenery for some time.

"23d *August*, 1814.—Wake under the Castle of Dunvegan, in the Loch of Folliart. I had sent a card to the Laird of Macleod in the morning, who came off before we were dressed, and carried us to his castle to breakfast. A part of Dunvegan is very old; 'its birth tradition notes not.' Another large tower was built by the same Alaster Macleod whose burial-place and monument we saw yesterday at Rowdill. He had a Gaelic surname, signifying the Hump-backed. Roderick More (knighted by James VI.) erected a long edifice combining these two ancient towers: and other pieces of building, forming a square, were accomplished at different times. The whole castle occupies a precipitous mass of rock overhanging the lake, divided by two or three islands in that place, which form a snug little harbour under the walls. There is a court-yard looking out upon the sea, protected by a battery, at least a succession of embrasures, for only two guns are pointed, and these unfit for service. The ancient entrance rose up a flight of steps cut in the rock, and passed into this court-yard through a portal, but this is now demolished. You land under the castle, and, walking round, find yourself in front of it. This was originally inaccessible, for a brook coming down on the one side, a chasm of the rocks on the other, and a ditch in front, made it impervious. But the late Macleod built a bridge over the stream, and the present laird is executing an entrance suitable to the character of this remarkable fortalice, by making a portal between two advanced towers and an outer court, from which he proposes to throw a drawbridge over to the high rock in front of the castle. This, if well executed, cannot fail to have a good and characteristic effect. We were most kindly and hospitably received by the chieftain, his lady, and his sister;* the two last are pretty and accomplished young women, a sort of persons whom we have not seen for some time; and I was quite as much pleased with renewing my acquaintance with them as with the sight of a good field of barley just cut (the first harvest we have seen), not to mention an extensive young plantation and some middle-aged trees, though all had been strangers to mine eyes since I left Leith. In the garden—or rather the orchard which was formerly the garden—is a pretty cascade, divided into two branches, and called Roric More's Nurse, because he loved to be lulled to sleep by the sound of it. The day was rainy, or at least inconstant, so we could not walk far from the castle. Besides the assistance of the laird himself, who was most politely and easily attentive, we had that of an intelligent gentlemanlike clergyman, Mr. Suter, minister of Kilmore, to explain the *carte-de-pays*. Within the castle we saw a remarkable drinking-cup, with an inscription dated A. D. 993, which I have described particularly elsewhere.† I saw also a fairy flag, a pennon of silk, with something like round red rowan-berries wrought upon it. We also saw the drinking-horn of Rorie More, holding about three pints English measure, an ox's horn tipped with silver, not nearly so large as Watt of Harden's bugle. The rest of the curiosities in the castle are chiefly Indian, excepting an old dirk and the fragment of a two-handed sword. We learn that most of the Highland superstitions, even that of the second-sight, are still in force. Gruagach, a sort of tutelary divinity, often mentioned by Martin in his History of the Western Islands, has still his place and credit, but is modernized into a tall man, always a Lowlander, with a long coat and white waistcoat. Passed a very pleasant day. I should have said the fairy-flag had three properties. Produced in battle, it multiplied the numbers of the Macleods—spread on the nuptial bed, it brought fertility—and lastly, it brought herring into the loch.*

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* Miss Macleod, now Mrs. Spencer Percival.

† See note, Lord of the Isles, Scott's Poetical Works, vol. x. p. 24.

"24*th August*, 1814.—This morning resist with difficulty Macleod's kind and pressing entreaty to send round the ship and go to the cave at Airds by land; but our party is too large to be accommodated without inconvenience, and divisions are always awkward. Walk and see Macleod's farm. The plantations seem to thrive admirably, although I think he hazards planting his trees greatly too tall. Macleod is a spirited and judicious improver, and if he does not hurry too fast, cannot fail to be of service to his people. He seems to think and act much like a chief, without the fanfaronade of the character. See a female school patronised by Mrs. M. There are about twenty girls, who learn reading, writing, and spinning; and being compelled to observe habits of cleanliness and neatness when at school, will probably be the means of introducing them by degrees at home. The roads around the castle are, generally speaking, very good; some are old, some made under the operation of the late act. Macleod says almost all the contractors for these last roads have failed, being tightly looked after by Government, which I confess I think very right. If Government is to give relief where a disadvantageous contract has been engaged in, it is plain it cannot be refused in similar instances, so that all calculations of expenses in such operations are at an end. The day being delightfully fair and warm, we walk up to the church of Kilmore. In a cottage, at no great distance, we heard the women singing as they *waulked* the cloth by rubbing it with their hands and feet, and screaming all the while in a sort of chorus. At a distance, the sound was wild and sweet enough, but rather discordant when you approach too near the performers. In the churchyard, (otherwise not remarkable) was a pyramidical monument erected to the father of the celebrated Simon, Lord Lovat, who was fostered at Dunvegan. It is now nearly ruinous, and the inscription has fallen down. Return to the castle, take our luncheon, and go aboard at three—Macleod accompanying us in proper style with his piper. We take leave of the castle, where we have been so kindly entertained, with a salute of seven guns. The chief returns ashore, with his piper playing 'the Macleods' gathering,' heard to advantage along the calm and placid loch, and dying as it retreated from us.

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* The following passage from the last of Scott's Letters on Demonology, (written in 1830), refers to the night of this 23d of August, 1814. He mentions that twice in his life he had experienced the sensation which the Scotch call *eerie;* gives a night-piece of his early youth in the Castle of Glammis, which has already been quoted (*ante*, p. 126); and proceeds thus:—"Amid such tales of ancient tradition, I had from Macleod and his lady the courteous offer of the haunted apartment of the castle, about which, as a stranger, I might be supposed interested. Accordingly I took possession of it about the witching hour. Except, perhaps, some tapestry hangings, and the extreme thickness of the walls, which argued great antiquity, nothing could have been more comfortable than the interior of the apartment; but if you looked from the windows, the view was such as to correspond with the highest tone of superstition. An autumnal blast, sometimes clear, sometimes driving mist before it, swept along the troubled billows of the lake, which it occasionally concealed, and by fits disclosed. The waves rushed in wild disorder on the shore, and covered with foam the steep pile of rocks, which, rising from the sea in forms something resembling the human figure, have maintained the name of Macleod's Maidens, and, in such a night, seemed no bad representatives of the Norwegian goddesses, called Choosers of the Slain, or Riders of the Storm. There was something of the dignity of danger in the scene; for, on a platform beneath the windows, lay an ancient battery of cannon, which had sometimes been used against privateers even of late years. The distant scene was a view of that part of the Quillen mountains which are called, from their form, Macleod's Dining-Tables. The voice of an angry cascade, termed the Nurse of Rorie Mhor, because that chief slept best in its vicinity, was heard from time to time mingling its notes with those of wind and wave. Such was the haunted room at Dunvegan; and, as such, it well deserved a less sleepy inhabitant. In the language of Dr. Johnson, who has stamped his memory on this remote place,—'I looked around me, and wondered that I was not more affected; but the mind is not at all times equally ready to be moved.' In a word, it is necessary to confess that, of all I heard or saw, the most engaging spectacle was the comfortable bed in which I hoped to make amends for some rough nights on ship-board, and where I slept accordingly without thinking of ghost or goblin, till I was called by my servant in the morning."

"The towers of Dunvegan, with the banner which floated over them in honour of their guests, now showed to great advantage. On the right were a succession of three remarkable hills, with round flat tops, popularly called Macleod's Dining-Tables. Far behind these, in the interior of the island, arise the much higher and more romantic mountains, called Quillen or Cuillin, a name which they have been said to owe to no less a person than Cuthullin, or Cuchullin, celebrated by Ossian. I ought, I believe, to notice, that Macleod and Mr. Suter have both heard a tacksman of Macleod's called Grant, recite the celebrated Address to the Sun; and another person, whom they named, repeat the description of Cuchullin's car. But all agree as to the gross infidelity of Macpherson as a translator and editor. It ends in the explanation of the Adventures in the Cave of Montesinos, afforded to the Knight of La Mancha, by the ape of Gines de Passamonte—some are true and some are false. There is little poetical tradition in this country, yet there should be a great deal, considering how lately the bards and genealogists existed as a distinct order. Macleod's *hereditary* piper is called MacCrimmon, but the present holder of the office has risen above his profession. He is an old man, a lieutenant in the army, and a most capital piper, possessing about 200 tunes and pibrochs, most of which will probably die with him, as he declines to have any of his sons instructed in his art. He plays to Macleod and his lady, but only in the same room, and maintains his minstrel privilege by putting on his bonnet so soon as he begins to play. These MacCrimmons formerly kept a college in Skye for teaching the pipe-music. Macleod's present piper is of the name, but scarcely as yet a deacon of his craft. He played every day at dinner. After losing sight of the Castle of Dunvegan, we open another branch of the loch on which it is situated, and see a small village upon its distant bank. The mountains of Quillen continue to form a back-ground to the wild landscape with their variegated and peaked outline. We approach Dunvegan-head, a bold bluff cape, where the loch joins the ocean. The weather, hitherto so beautiful that we had dined on deck *en seigneurs*, becomes overcast and hazy, with little or no wind. Laugh and lie down.

"*25th August*, 1814. Rise about eight o'clock, the yacht gliding delightfully along the coast of Skye with a fair wind and excellent day. On the opposite side lie the islands of Canna, Rum, and Muick, popularly Muck. On opening the Sound between Rum and Canna, see a steep circular rock, forming one side of the harbour, on the point of which we can discern the remains of a tower of small dimensions, built, it is said, by a King of the Isles to secure a wife of whom he was jealous. But, as we kept the Skye side of the Sound, we saw little of these islands but what our spy-glasses could show us; the coast of Skye is highly romantic, and at the same time displayed a richness of vegetation on the lower grounds, to which we have hitherto been strangers. We passed three salt-water lochs, or deep embayments, called Loch Bracadale, Loch Eynort, and Loch Britta—and about eleven o'clock open Loch Scavig. We were now under the western termination of the high mountains of Quillen, whose weather-beaten and serrated peaks we had admired at a distance from Dunvegan. They sunk here upon the sea, but with the same bold and peremptory aspect which their distant appearance indicated. They seemed to consist of precipitous sheets of naked rock, down which the torrents were leaping in a hundred lines of foam. The tops, apparently inaccessible to human foot, were rent and split into the most tremendous pinnacles; towards the base of these bare and precipitous crags, the ground, enriched by the soil washed away from them, is verdant and productive. Having passed within the small isle of Soa, we enter Loch Scavig under the shoulder of one of these grisly mountains, and observe that the opposite side of the loch is of a milder character softened down into steep green declivities. From the depth of the bay advanced a headland of high rocks which divided the lake into two recesses, from each of which a brook seemed to issue. Here Macleod had intimated we should find a romantic loch, but we were uncertain up what inlet we should proceed in search of it. We chose, against our better judgment, the southerly inlet where we saw a house which might afford us information. On manning our boat and rowing ashore, we observed a hurry among the inhabitants, owing to our being as usual suspected for *king's men*, although, Heaven knows, we have nothing to do with the revenue but to spend the part of it corresponding to our equipment. We find that there is a lake adjoining to each branch of the bay, and foolishly walk a couple of miles to see that next the farm-house, merely because the honest man seemed jealous of the honour of his own loch, though we were speedily convinced it was not that which we had been recommended to examine. It had no peculiar merit excepting from its neighbourhood to a very high cliff or mountain of precipitous granite; otherwise, the sheet of water does not equal even Cauldshiels Loch. Returned and re-embarked in our boat, for our guide shook his head at our proposal to climb over the peninsula which divides the two bays and the two lakes. In rowing round the headland surprised at the infinite number of sea-fowl, then busy apparently with a shoal of fish; at the depth of the bay, find that the discharge from this second lake forms a sort of waterfall or rather rapid; round this place were assembled hundreds of trouts and salmon struggling to get up into the fresh water; with a net we might have had twenty salmon at a haul, and a sailor, with no better hook than a crooked pin, caught a dish of trouts during our absence.

"Advancing up this huddling and riotous brook, we found ourselves in a most extraordinary scene; we were surrounded by hills of the boldest and most precipitous character, and on the margin of a lake which seemed to have sustained the constant ravages of torrents from these rude neighbours. The shores consisted of huge layers of naked granite, here and there intermixed with bogs, and heaps of gravel and sand marking the course of torrents. Vegetation there was little or none, and the mountains rose so perpendicularly from the water's edge, that Borrowdale is a jest to them. We proceeded about one mile and a half up this deep, dark, and solitary lake, which is about two miles long, half a mile broad, and, as we learned, of extreme depth. The vapour which enveloped the mountain ridges obliged us by assuming a thousand shapes, varying its veils in all sort of forms, but sometimes clearing off altogether. It is true it made us pay the penalty by some heavy and downright showers, from the frequency of which, a Highland boy, whom we brought from the farm, told us the lake was popularly called the Water Kettle. The proper name is Loch Corriskin, from the deep *corrie* or hollow in the mountains of Cuillin, which affords the basin for this wonderful sheet of water. It is as exquisite as a savage scene, as Loch Katrine is as a scene of stern beauty. After having penetrated so far as distinctly to observe the termination of the lake, under an immense mountain which rises abruptly from the head of the waters, we returned, and often stopped to admire the ravages which storms must have made in these recesses when all human witnesses were driven to places of more shelter and security. Stones, or rather large massive fragments of rock of a composite kind, perfectly different from the granite barriers of the lake, lay upon the rocky beach in the strangest and most precarious situations, as if abandoned by the torrents which had borne them down from above; some lay loose and tottering upon the ledges of the natural rock, with so little security that the slightest push moved them, though their weight exceeded many tons. These detached rocks were chiefly what are called plum-pudding stones. Those which formed the shore were granite. The opposite side of the lake seemed quite pathless, as a huge mountain, one of the detached ridges of the Quillen, sinks in a profound and almost perpendicular precipice down to the water. On the left hand side, which we traversed, rose a higher and equally inaccessible mountain, the top of which seemed to contain the crater of an exhausted volcano. I never saw a spot on which there was less appearance of vegetation of any kind; the eye rested on nothing but brown and naked crags,* and the rocks on which we walked by the side of the loch were as bare as the pavement of Cheapside. There are one or two spots of islets in the loch which seem to bear juniper, or some such low bushy shrub.

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* 'Rarely human eye has known
A scene so stern as that dread lake,
With its dark ledge of barren stone.
Seems that primeval earthquake's sway
Hath rent a strange and shatter'd way

"Returned from our extraordinary walk, and went on board. During dinner, our vessel quitted Loch Scavig, and having doubled its southern cape, opened the bay or salt-water Loch of Sleapin. There went again on shore to visit the late discovered and much celebrated cavern, called Macallister's Cave. It opens at the end of a deep ravine running upward from the sea, and the proprietor, Mr. Macallister of Strath Aird, finding that visiters injured it, by breaking and carrying away the stalactites with which it abounds, has secured this cavern by an eight or nine feet wall, with a door. Upon enquiring for the key, we found it was three miles up the loch at the laird's house. It was now late, and to stay until a messenger had gone and returned three miles, was not to be thought of, any more than the alternative of going up the loch and lying there all night. We therefore, with regret, resolved to scale the wall, in which attempt, by the assistance of a rope and some ancient acquaintance with orchard-breaking, we easily succeeded. The first entrance to this celebrated cave is rude and unpromising, but the light of the torches with which we were provided, is soon reflected from roof, floor, and walls, which seem as if they were sheeted with marble, partly smooth, partly rough with frost-work and rustic ornaments, and partly wrought into statuary. The floor forms a steep and difficult ascent, and might be fancifully compared to a sheet of water, which, while it rushed whitening and foaming down a declivity, had been suddenly arrested and consolidated by the spell of an enchanter. Upon attaining the summit of this ascent, the cave descends with equal rapidity to the brink of a pool of the most limpid water, about four or five yards broad. There opens beyond this pool a portal arch, with beautiful white chasing upon the sides, which promises a continuation of the cave. One of our sailors swam across, for there was no other mode of passing, and informed us (as indeed we partly saw by the light he carried), that the enchantment of Macallister's cave terminated with this portal, beyond which there was only a rude ordinary cavern speedily choked with stones and earth. But the pool, on the brink of which we stood, surrounded by the most fanciful mouldings in a substance resembling white marble, and distinguished by the depth and purity of its waters, might be the bathing grotto of a Naiad. I think a statuary might catch beautiful hints from the fanciful and romantic disposition of the stalactites. There is scarce a form or group that an active fancy may not trace among the grotesque ornaments which have been gradually moulded in this cavern by the dropping of the calcareous water, and its hardening into petrifactions; many of these have been destroyed by the senseless rage of appropriation among recent tourists, and the grotto has lost (I am informed), through the smoke of torches, much of that vivid silver tint which was originally one of its chief distinctions. But enough of beauty remains to compensate for all that may be lost. As the easiest mode of return, I slid down the polished sheet of marble which forms the rising ascent, and thereby injured my pantaloons in a way which my jacket is ill calculated to conceal. Our wearables, after a month's hard service, begin to be

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Through the rude bosom of the hill;
And that each naked precipice,
Sable ravine, and dark abyss,
Tells of the outrage still.
The wildest glen, but this, can show
Some touch of Nature's genial glow;
On high Benmore green mosses grow,
And heath-bells bud in deep Glencroe,
And copse on Cruchan-Ben;
But here—above, around, below,
On mountain or in glen,
Nor tree, nor shrub, nor plant, nor flower,
Nor aught of vegetative power,
The weary eye may ken;
For all is rocks at random thrown,
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone,
As if were here denied
The summer's sun, the spring's sweet dew,
That clothe with many a varied hue
The bleakest mountain-side.'

Lord of the Isles, III. 14.

frail, and there are daily demands for repairs. Our eatables also begin to assume a real nautical appearance—no soft bread—milk a rare commodity—and those gentlemen most in favour with John Peters, the steward, who prefer salt beef to fresh. To make amends, we never hear of sea-sickness, and the good-humour and harmony of the party continue uninterrupted. When we left the cave we carried off two grandsons of Mr. Macallister's, remarkably fine boys; and Erskine, who may be called *L'ami des Enfans*, treated them most kindly, and showed them all the curiosities in the vessel, causing even the guns to be fired for their amusement, besides filling their pockets with almonds and raisins. So that, with a handsome letter of apology, I hope we may erase any evil impression Mr. Macallister may adopt from our storming the exterior defences of his cavern. After having sent them ashore in safety, stand out of the bay with little or no wind, for the opposite island of Egg."

CHAPTER XXXII.

DIARY CONTINUED—CAVE OF EGG—IONA—STAFFA—DUNSTAFFNAGE—DUNLUCE CASTLE—GIANTS' CAUSEWAY—ISLE OF ARRAN, &c.—DIARY CONCLUDED, AUGUST—SEPTEMBER, 1814.

"*26th August*, 1814.—At seven this morning were in the Sound which divides the Isle of Rum from that of Egg. Rum is rude, barren, and mountainous; Egg, although hilly and rocky, and traversed by one remarkable ridge called Scuir-Egg, has, in point of soil, a much more promising appearance. Southward of both lies Muick, or Muck, a low and fertile island, and though the least, yet probably the most valuable of the three. Caverns being still the order of the day, we man the boat and row along the shore of Egg, in quest of that which was the memorable scene of a horrid feudal vengeance. We had rounded more than half the island, admiring the entrance of many a bold natural cave which its rocks exhibit, but without finding that which we sought, until we procured a guide. This noted cave has a very narrow entrance, through which one can hardly creep on knees and hands. It rises steep and lofty within, and runs into the bowels of the rock to the depth of 255 measured feet. The height at the entrance may be about three feet, but rises to eighteen or twenty, and the breadth may vary in the same proportion. The rude and stony bottom of this cave is strewed with the bones of men, women, and children, being the sad relics of the ancient inhabitants of the island, 200 in number, who were slain on the following occasion:—The Macdonalds of the Isle of Egg, a people dependent on Clanranald, had done some injury to the Laird of Macleod. The tradition of the isle says, that it was by a personal attack on the chieftain, in which his back was broken; but that of the other isles bears that the injury was offered to two or three of the Macleods, who, landing upon Egg and using some freedom with the young women, were seized by the islanders, bound hand and foot, and turned adrift in a boat, which the winds and waves safely conducted to Skye. To avenge the offence given, Macleod sailed with such a body of men as rendered resistance hopeless. The natives, fearing his vengeance, concealed themselves in this cavern, and after strict search, the Macleods went on board their galleys, after doing what mischief they could, concluding the inhabitants had left the isle. But next morning they espied from their vessel a man upon the island, and, immediately landing again, they traced his retreat, by means of a light snow on the ground, to this cavern. Macleod then summoned the subterraneous garrison, and demanded that the individuals who had offended him, should be delivered up. This was peremptorily refused. The chieftain thereupon caused his people to divert the course of a rill of water, which, falling over the mouth of the cave, would have prevented his purposed vengeance. He then kindled at the entrance of the cavern a huge fire, and maintained it until all within were destroyed by suffocation. The date of this dreadful deed must have been recent, if one can judge from the fresh appearance of those relics. I brought off, in spite of the prejudices of our sailors, a skull, which seems that of a young woman.

"Before re-embarking, we visit another cave opening to the sea, but of a character widely different, being a large open vault as high as that of a cathedral, and running back a great way into the rock at the same height; the height and width of the opening give light to the whole. Here, after 1745, when the Catholic priests were scarcely tolerated, the priest of Egg used to perform the Romish service. A huge ledge of rock, almost half-way up one side of the vault, served for altar and pulpit; and the appearance of a priest and Highland congregation in such an extraordinary place of worship, might have engaged the pencil of Salvator. Most of the inhabitants of Egg are still Catholics, and laugh at their neighbours of Rum, who, having been converted by the cane of their chieftain, are called *Protestants of the yellow stick.* The Presbyterian minister and Catholic priest live upon this little island on very good terms. The people here were much irritated against the men of a revenue vessel who had seized all the stills, &c., in the neighbouring Isle of Muck, with so much severity as to take even the people's bedding. We had been mistaken for some time for this obnoxious vessel. Got on board about two o'clock, and agreed to stand over for Coll, and to be ruled by the wind as to what was next to be done. Bring up my journal.

"*27th August*, 1814.—The wind, to which we resigned ourselves, proves exceedingly tyrannical, and blows squally the whole night, which, with the swell of the Atlantic, now unbroken by any islands to windward, proves a means of great combustion in the cabin. The dishes and glasses in the steward's cupboards become locomotive—portmanteaus and writing-desks are more active than necessary—it is scarcely possible to keep one's self within bed, and impossible to stand upright if you rise. Having crept upon deck about four in the morning, I find we are beating to windward off the Isle of Tyree, with the determination on the part of Mr. Stevenson, that his constituents should visit a reef of rocks called *Skerry Vhor*, where he thought it would be essential to have a lighthouse. Loud remonstrances on the part of the Commissioners, who one and all declare they will subscribe to his opinion, whatever it may be, rather than continue this infernal buffeting. Quiet perseverance on the part of Mr. S., and great kicking, bouncing, and squabbling upon that of the yacht, who seems to like the idea of Skerry Vhor as little as the Commissioners. At length, by dint of exertion, come in sight of this long ridge of rocks (chiefly under water), on which the tide breaks in a most tremendous style. There appear a few low broad rocks at one end of the reef, which is about a mile in length. These are never entirely under water, though the surf dashes over them. To go through all the forms, Hamilton, Duff, and I, resolve to land upon these bare rocks in company with Mr. Stevenson. Pull through a very heavy swell with great difficulty, and approach a tremendous surf dashing over black pointed rocks. Our rowers, however, get the boat into a quiet creek between two rocks, where we contrive to land well wetted. I saw nothing remarkable in my way, excepting several seals, which we might have shot, but, in the doubtful circumstances of the landing, we did not care to bring guns. We took possession of the rock in name of the Commissioners, and generously bestowed our own great names on its crags and creeks. The rock was carefully measured by Mr. S. It will be a most desolate position for a lighthouse—the Bell Rock and Eddystone a joke to it, for the nearest land is the wild island of Tyree, at fourteen miles' distance. So much for the Skerry Vhor.

"Came on board proud of our achievement; and, to the great delight of all parties, put the ship before the wind, and run swimmingly down for Iona. See a large square-rigged vessel, supposed an American. Reach Iona about five o'clock. The inhabitants of the isle of Columba, understanding their interest as well as if they had been Deal boatmen, charged two guineas for pilotage, which Captain W. abridged into fifteen shillings, too much for ten minutes' work. We soon got on shore, and landed in the bay of Martyrs, beautiful for its white sandy beach. Here all dead bodies are still landed, and laid for a time upon a small rocky eminence, called the Sweyne, before they are interred. Iona, the last time I saw it, seemed to me to contain the most wretched people I had any where seen. But either they have got better since I was here, or my eyes, familiarized with the wretchedness of Zetland and the Harris, are less shocked with that of Iona. Certainly their houses are better than either, and the appearance of the people not worse. This little fertile isle contains upwards of 400 inhabitants, all living upon small farms, which they divide and subdivide as their families increase, so that the country is greatly over-peopled, and in some danger of a famine in case of a year of scarcity. Visit the nunnery and Reilig Oran, or burial-place of St. Oran, but the night coming on we return on board.

"*28th August*, 1814.—Carry our breakfast ashore—take that repast in the house of Mr. Maclean, the schoolmaster and cicerone of the island—and resume our investigation of the ruins of the cathedral and the cemetery. Of these monuments, more than of any other, it may be said with propriety,

> 'You never tread upon them but you set
> Your feet upon some ancient history.'

I do not mean to attempt a description of what is so well-known as the ruins of Iona. Yet I think it has been as yet inadequately performed, for the vast number of carved tombs containing the reliques of the great, exceeds credibility. In general, even in the most noble churches, the number of the vulgar dead exceed in all proportion the few of eminence who are deposited under monuments. Iona is in all respects the reverse; until lately the inhabitants of the isle did not presume to mix their vulgar dust with that of chiefs, reguli, and abbots. The number, therefore, of carved and inscribed tombstones is quite marvellous, and I can easily credit the story told by Sacheverell, who assures us that 300 inscriptions had been collected, and were lost in the troubles of the 17th century. Even now many more might be deciphered than have yet been made public, but the rustic step of the peasants and of Sassenach visitants is fast destroying these faint memorials of the valiant of the isles. A skilful antiquary remaining here a week, and having (or assuming) the power of raising the half-sunk monuments, might make a curious collection. We could only gaze and grieve; yet had the day not been Sunday, we would have brought our seamen ashore, and endeavoured to have raised some of these monuments. The celebrated ridges called *Jomaire na'n Righrean*, or Graves of the Kings, can now scarce be said to exist, though their site is still pointed out. Undoubtedly, the thirst of spoil, and the frequent custom of burying treasures with the ancient princes, occasioned their early violation; nor am I any sturdy believer in their being regularly ticketed off by inscriptions into the tombs of the Kings of Scotland, of Ireland, of Norway, and so forth. If such inscriptions ever existed, I should deem them the work of some crafty bishop or abbot, for the credit of his diocese or convent. Macbeth is said to have been the last King of Scotland here buried; sixty preceded him, all doubtless as powerful in their day, but now unknown—*carent quia vate sacro*. A few weeks' labour of Shakspeare, an obscure player, has done more for the memory of Macbeth than all the gifts, wealth, and monuments of this cemetery of princes have been able to secure to the rest of its inhabitants. It also occurred to me in Iona (as it has on many similar occasions) that the traditional recollections concerning the monks themselves are wonderfully faint, contrasted with the beautiful and interesting monuments of architecture which they have left behind them. In Scotland particularly, the people have frequently traditions wonderfully vivid of the persons and achievements of ancient warriors, whose towers have long been levelled with the soil. But of the monks of Melrose, Kelso, Aberbrothock, Iona, &c. &c. &c., they can tell nothing but that such a race existed, and inhabited the stately ruins of these monasteries. The quiet, slow, and uniform life of those recluse beings, glided on, it may be, like a dark and silent stream, fed from unknown resources, and vanishing from the eye, without leaving any marked trace of its course. The life of the chieftain was a mountain torrent thundering over rock and precipice, which, less deep and profound in itself, leaves on the minds of the terrified spectators those deep impressions of awe and wonder which are most readily handed down to posterity.

"Among the various monuments exhibited at Iona, is one where a Maclean lies in the same grave with one of the Macfies or Macduffies of Colonsay, with whom he had lived in alternate friendship and enmity during their lives. 'He lies above him during death,' said one of Maclean's followers, as his chief was interred, 'as he was above him during life.' There is a very ancient monument lying among those of the Macleans, but perhaps more ancient than any of them; it has a knight riding on horseback, and behind him a minstrel playing on a harp; this is conjectured to be Reginald Macdonald of the Isles, but there seems no reason for disjoining him from his kindred who sleep in the cathedral. A supposed ancestor of the Stewarts, called Paul Pearson, or Paul the purse-bearer (treasurer to the King of

Scotland), is said to lie under a stone near the Lords of the Isles. Most of the monuments engraved by Pennant are still in the same state of preservation, as are the few ancient crosses which are left. What a sight Iona must have been, when 360 crosses, of the same size and beautiful workmanship, were ranked upon the little rocky ridge of eminences which form the background to the cathedral! Part of the tower of the cathedral has fallen since I was here. It would require a better architect than I am, to say any thing concerning the antiquity of these ruins, but I conceive those of the nunnery and of the *Reilig nan Oran*, or Oran's chapel, are decidedly the most ancient. Upon the cathedral and buildings attached to it, there are marks of repairs at different times, some of them of a late date, being obviously designed not to enlarge the buildings, but to retrench them. We take a reluctant leave of Iona, and go on board.

"The haze and dullness of the atmosphere seem to render it dubious if we can proceed, as we intended, to Staffa to-day—for mist among these islands is rather unpleasant. Erskine reads prayers on deck to all hands, and introduces a very apt allusion to our being now in sight of the first Christian Church from which Revelation was diffused over Scotland and all its islands. There is a very good form of prayer for the Lighthouse Service, composed by the Rev. Mr. Brunton.* A pleasure vessel lies under our lee from Belfast, with an Irish party related to Macniel of Colonsay. The haze is fast degenerating into downright rain, and that right heavy—verifying the words of Collins—

> 'And thither where beneath the *showery west*
> The mighty Kings of three fair realms are laid.'

After dinner, the weather being somewhat cleared, sailed for Staffa, and took boat. The surf running heavy up between the island and the adjacent rock, called Booshala, we landed at a creek near the Cormorant's cave. The mist now returned so thick as to hide all view of Iona, which was our land-mark; and although Duff, Stevenson, and I, had been formerly on the isle, we could not agree upon the proper road to the cave. I engaged myself, with Duff and Erskine, in a clamber of great toil and danger, and which at length brought me to the *Cannon-ball*, as they call a round granite stone moved by the sea up and down in a groove of rock, which it has worn for itself, with a noise resembling thunder. Here I gave up my research, and returned to my companions, who had not been more fortunate. As night was now falling, we resolved to go aboard and postpone the adventure of the enchanted cavern until next day. The yacht came to an anchor with the purpose of remaining off the island all night, but the hardness of the ground, and the weather becoming squally, obliged us to return to our safer mooring at Y-Columb-Kill.

"*29th August*, 1814.—Night squally and rainy—morning ditto—we weigh, however, and return toward Staffa, and, very happily, the day clears as we approach the isle. As we ascertained the situation of the cave, I shall only make this memorandum, that when the weather will serve, the best landing is to the lee of Booshala, a little conical islet or rock, composed of basaltic columns placed in an oblique or sloping position. In this way, you land at once on the flat causeway, formed by the heads of truncated pillars, which leads to the cave. But if the state of the tide renders it impossible to land under Booshala, then take one of the adjacent creeks; in which case, keeping to the left hand along the top of the ledge of rocks which girdles in the isle, you find a dangerous and precipitous descent to the causeway aforesaid, from the table. Here we were under the necessity of towing our Commodore, Hamilton, whose gallant heart never fails him, whatever the tenderness of his toes may do. He was successfully lowered by a rope down the precipice, and proceeding along the flat terrace or causeway already mentioned, we reached the celebrated cave. I am not sure whether I was not more affected by this second, than by the first view of it. The stupendous columnar side walls—the depth and strength of the ocean with which the cavern is filled—the variety of tints formed by stalactites dropping and petrifying between the pillars, and resembling a sort of chasing of yellow or cream-coloured marble filling the interstices of the roof—the corresponding variety below, where the ocean rolls over a red, and in some places, a violet-coloured rock, the basis of the basaltic pillars—the dreadful noise of those august billows so well corresponding with the grandeur of the scene —are all circumstances elsewhere unparalleled. We have now seen in our voyage the three grandest caverns in Scotland, Smowe, Macallister's cave, and Staffa; so that, like the Troglodytes of yore, we may be supposed to know something of the matter. It is, however, impossible to compare scenes of natures so different, nor, were I compelled to assign a preference to any of the three, could I do it but with reference to their distinct characters, which might affect different individuals in different degrees. The characteristic of the Smowe cave may in this case be called the terrific, for the difficulties which oppose the stranger are of a nature so uncommonly wild as, for the first time at least, convey an impression of terror—with which the scenes to which he is introduced fully correspond. On the other hand, the dazzling whiteness of the incrustations in Macallister's cave, the elegance of the entablature, the beauty of its limpid pool, and the graceful dignity of its arch, render its leading features those of severe and chastened beauty. Staffa, the third of these subterraneous wonders, may challenge sublimity as its principal characteristic. Without the savage gloom of the Smowe cave, and investigated with more apparent ease, though, perhaps, with equal real danger, the stately regularity of its columns forms a contrast to the grotesque imagery of Macallister's cave, combining at once the sentiments of grandeur and beauty. The former is, however, predominant, as it must necessarily be in any scene of the kind.

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* The Rev. Alexander Brunton, D. D., now (1836) Professor of Oriental Languages in the University of Edinburgh.

"We had scarce left Staffa when the wind and rain returned. It was Erskine's object and mine, to dine at Torloisk on Loch Tua, the seat of my valued friend Mrs. Maclean Clephane, and her accomplished daughters. But in going up Loch Tua betwee Ulva and Mull with this purpose,

'So thick was the mist on the ocean green,
Nor cape nor headland could be seen.'

It was late before we came to anchor in a small bay presented by the little island of Gometra, which may be regarded as a continuation of Ulva. We therefore dine aboard, and after dinner, Erskine and I take the boat and row across the loch under a heavy rain. We could not see the house of Torloisk, so very thick was the haze, and we were a good deal puzzled how and where to achieve a landing; at length, espying a cart-road, we resolved to trust to its guidance, as we knew we must be near the house. We therefore went ashore with our servants, *à la bonne aventure*, under a drizzling rain. This was soon a matter of little consequence, for the necessity of crossing a swollen brook wetted me considerably, and Erskine, whose foot slipped, most completely. In wet and weary plight we reached the house after a walk of a mile, in darkness, dirt, and rain, and it is hardly necessary to say, that the pleasure of seeing our friends soon banished all recollection of our unpleasant voyage and journey.

"*30th August*, 1814.—The rest of our friends come ashore by invitation, and breakfast with the ladies, whose kindness would fain have delayed us for a few days, and at last condescended to ask for one day only—but even this could not be, our time wearing short. Torloisk is finely situated upon the coast of Mull, facing Staffa. It is a good comfortable house, to which Mrs. Clephane has made some additions. The grounds around have been dressed, so as to smooth their ruggedness, without destroying the irregular and wild character peculiar to the scene and country. In this, much taste has been displayed. At Torloisk, as at Dunvegan, trees grow freely and rapidly, and the extensive plantations formed by Mrs. C. serve to show that nothing but a little expense and patience on the part of the proprietors, with attention to planting in proper places at first, and in keeping up fences afterward, are awanting to remove the reproach of nakedness so often thrown upon the Western Isles. With planting comes shelter and the proper allotment and division of fields. With all this Mrs. Clephane is busied, and, I trust, successfully; I am sure, actively and usefully. Take leave of my fair friends, with regret that I cannot prolong my stay for a day or two. When we come on board, we learn that Staffa-Macdonald is just come to his house of Ulva; this is a sort of unpleasant dilemma, for we cannot now go there without some neglect towards Mrs. Maclean Clephane; and, on the other hand, from his habits with all of us, he may be justly displeased with our quitting his very threshold without asking for him. However, upon the whole matter, and being already under weigh, we judged it best to work out of the loch, and continue our purpose of rounding the northern extremity of Mull, and then running down the Sound between Mull and the mainland. We had not long pursued our voyage before we found it was like to be a very slow one. The wind fell away entirely, and after repeated tacks we could hardly clear the extreme north-western point of Mull by six o'clock—which must have afforded amusement to the ladies whose hospitable entreaties we had resisted, as we were almost all the while visible from Torloisk. A fine evening, but scarce a breath of wind.

"31*st August*, 1814.—Went on deck between three and four in the morning, and found the vessel almost motionless in a calm sea, scarce three miles advanced on her voyage. We had, however, rounded the north-western side of Mull, and were advancing between the north-eastern side and the rocky and wild shores of Ardnamurchan on the mainland of Scotland. Astern were visible in bright moonlight the distant mountains of Rum; yet nearer, the remarkable ridge in the Isle of Egg, called Scuir-Egg; and nearest of all the low isle of Muick. After enjoying this prospect for some time, returned to my berth. Rise before eight—a delightful day, but very calm, and the little wind there is decidedly against us. Creeping on slowly, we observe upon the shore of Ardnamurchan, a large old castle called Mingary. It appears to be surrounded with a very high wall, forming a kind of polygon, in order to adapt itself to the angles of a precipice overhanging the sea, on which the castle is founded. Within or beyond the wall, and probably forming part of an inner court, I observed a steep roof and windows, probably of the 17th century. The whole, as seen with a spy-glass, seems ruinous. As we proceed, we open on the left hand Loch Sunart, running deep into the mainland, crossed by distant ridges of rocks, and terminating apparently among the high mountains above Strontian. On the right hand we open the sound of Mull, and pass the Bloody Bay, which acquired that name from a desperate battle fought between an ancient Lord of the Isles and his son. The latter was assisted by the M'Leans of Mull, then in the plenitude of their power, but was defeated. This was a sea-fight; galleys being employed on each side. It has bequeathed a name to a famous pibroch.

"Proceeding southward, we open the beautiful bay of Tobermory, or Mary's Well. The mouth of this fine natural roadstead is closed by an isle called Colvay, having two passages, of which only one, the northerly, is passable for ships. The bay is surrounded by steep hills, covered with copsewood, through which several brooks seek the sea in a succession of beautiful cascades. The village has been established as a fishing station by the Society for British Fisheries. The houses along the quay are two and three stories high, and well built; the feuars paying to the Society sixpence per foot of their line of front. On the top of a steep bank, rising above the first town, runs another line of second-rate cottages, which pay fourpence per foot; and behind are huts, much superior to the ordinary sheds of the country, which pay only twopence per foot. The town is all built upon a regular plan, laid down by the Society. The new part is reasonably clean, and the old not unreasonably dirty. We landed at an excellent quay, which is not yet finished, and found the little place looked thriving and active. The people were getting in their patches of corn; and the shrill voices of the children, attending their parents in the field, and loading the little ponies which are used in transporting the grain, formed a chorus not disagreeable to those whom it reminds of similar sounds at home. The praise of comparative cleanliness does not extend to the lanes around Tobermory, in one of which I had nearly been effectually bogged. But the richness of the round steep green knolls, clothed with copse, and glancing with cascades, and a pleasant peep at a small fresh-water loch embosomed among them—the view of the bay, surrounded and guarded by the island of Colvay—the gliding of two or three vessels in the more distant Sound—and the row of the gigantic Ardnamurchan mountains closing the scene to the north, almost justify the eulogium of Sacheverel, who, in 1688, declared the bay of Tobermory might equal any prospect in Italy. It is said that Sacheverel made some money by weighing up the treasures lost in the Florida, a vessel of the Spanish Armada, which was wrecked in the harbour. He himself affirms, that though the use of diving-bells was at first successful, yet the attempt was afterwards disconcerted by bad weather.

"Tobermory takes its name from a spring dedicated to the Virgin, which was graced by a chapel, but no vestiges remain of the chapel, and the spring rises in the middle of a swamp, whose depth and dirt discouraged the nearer approach of Protestant pilgrims. Mr. Stevenson, whose judgment is unquestionable, thinks that the village should have been built on the island called Colvay, and united to the continent by a key, or causeway, built along the southermost channel, which is very shallow. By this means the people would have been much nearer the fishings, then retired into the depth of the bay.

" About three o'clock we get on board, and a brisk and favourable breeze arises which carries us smoothly down the Sound. We soon pass Arros, with its fragment of a castle, behind which is the house of Mr. Maxwell (an odd name for this country), chamberlain to the Duke of Argyle, which reminds me of much kindness and hospitality received from him and Mr. Stewart, the sheriff-substitute, when I was formerly in Mull. On the shore of Morven, on the opposite side, pass the ruins of a small fortalice, called Donagail, situated as usual on a precipice overhanging the sea. The 'Woody Morven,' though the quantity of shaggy diminutive copse, which springs up where it obtains any shelter, still shows that it must once have merited the epithet, is now, as visible from the Sound of Mull, a bare country—of which the hills towards the sea have a slope much resembling those in Selkirkshire, and accordingly afford excellent pasture, and around several farm-houses well cultivated and improved fields. I think I observe considerable improvement in husbandry, even since I was here last; but there is a difference in coming from Oban and Cape Wrath.—Open Loch Alline, a beautiful salt-water lake, with a narrow outlet to the Sound. It is surrounded by round hills, sweetly fringed with green copse below, and one of which exhibits to the spy-glass ruins of a castle. There is great promise of beauty in its interior, but we cannot see every thing. The land on the southern bank of the entrance slopes away into a promontory, at the extremity of which are the very imperfect ruins of the Castle of Ardtornish, to which the Lord of the Isles summoned parliaments, and from whence one of them dated a treaty with the Crown of England as an independent Prince. These ruins are seen to most advantage from the south, where they are brought into a line with one high fragment towards the west predominating over the rest. The shore of the promontory on the south side becomes rocky, and when it slopes down to the west rises into a very bold and high precipitous bank, skirting the bay on the western side, partly cliffy, partly covered with brushwood, with various streams dashing over it from a great height. Above the old castle of Ardtornish, and about where the promontory joins the land, stands the present mansion, a neat white-washed house, with several well enclosed and well cultivated fields surrounding it.

" The high and dignified character assumed by the shores of Morven after leaving Ardtornish, continues till we open the Loch Linnhe, the commencement of the great chain of inland lakes running up to Fort-William, and which it is proposed to unite with Inverness by means of the Caledonian Canal. The wisdom of the plan adopted in this national measure seems very dubious. Had the canal been of more moderate depth, and the burdens imposed upon passing vessels less expensive, there can be no doubt that the coasters, sloops, and barks, would have carried on a great trade by means of it. But the expense and plague of locks, &c., may prevent these humble vessels from taking this abridged voyage, while ships above twenty or thirty tons will hesitate to engage themselves in the intricacies of a long lake navigation, exposed, without room for manœuvring, to all the sudden squalls of a mountainous country. Ahead of us, in the mouth of Loch Linnhe, lies the low and fertile isle of Lismore, formerly the appanage of the Bishops of the Isles, who, as usual, knew where to choose church patrimony. The coast of the Mull, on the right hand of the Sound, has a black, rugged, and unimproved character. Above Scallister bay are symptoms of improvement. Moonlight has risen upon us as we pass Duart Castle, now an indistinct mass upon its projecting promontory. It was garrisoned for Government so late as 1780, but is now ruinous. We see, at about a mile's distance, the fatal shelve on which Duart exposed the daughter of Argyle, on which Miss Baillie's play of the Family Legend is founded, but now,

'Without either sound or sign of their shock,
The waves roll over the Lady's rock.'

The placid state of the sea is very different from what I have seen it, when six stout rowers could scarce give a boat headway through the conflicting tides. These fits of violence so much surprised and offended a body of the Camerons, who were bound upon some expedition to Mull, and had been accustomed to the quietness of lake-navigation, that they drew their dirks, and began to stab the waves—from which popular tale this run of tide is called *the Men of Lochaber*. The weather being delightfully moderate, we agree to hover hereabout all night, or anchor under the Mull shore, should it be necessary, in order to see Dunstaffnage to-morrow morning. The isle of Kerrera is now in sight, forming the bay of Oban. Beyond lie the varied and magnificent summits of the chain of mountains bordering Loch Linnhe, as well as those between Loch Awe and Loch Etive, over which the summit of Ben Cruachan is proudly prominent. Walk on deck, admiring this romantic prospect until ten; then below, and turn in.

"*1st September*, 1814.—Rise betwixt six and seven, and having discreetly secured our breakfast, take boat for the old castle of Dunstaffnage, situated upon a promontory on the side of Loch Linnhe and near to Loch Etive. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the day and of the prospect. We coasted the low, large, and fertile isle of Lismore, where a Catholic Bishop, Chisholm, has established a seminary of young men intended for priests, and what is a better thing, a valuable lime-work. Report speaks well of the lime, but indifferently of the progress of the students. Tacking to the shore of the loch, we land at Dunstaffnage, once, it is said, the seat of the Scottish monarchy, till success over the Picts and Saxons transferred their throne to Scoone, Dumfermline, and at length to Edinburgh. The Castle is still the King's (nominally), and the Duke of Argyle (nominally also) is hereditary keeper. But the real right of property is in the family of the depute-keeper, to which it was assigned as an appanage, the first possessor being a natural son of an Earl of Argyle. The shell of the castle, for little more now remains, bears marks of extreme antiquity. It is square in form, with round towers at three of the angles, and is situated upon a lofty precipice, carefully scarped on all sides to render it perpendicular. The entrance is by a staircase, which conducts you to a wooden landing-place in front of the portal-door. This landing-place could formerly be raised at pleasure, being of the nature of a drawbridge. When raised, the place was inaccessible. You pass under an ancient arch, with a low vault (being the porter's lodge) on the right hand, and flanked by loopholes, for firing upon any hostile guest who might force his passage thus far. This admits you into the inner-court, which is about eighty feet square. It contains two mean-looking buildings, about sixty or seventy years old; the ancient castle having been consumed by fire in 1715. It is said that the nephew of the proprietor was the incendiary. We went into the apartments, and found they did not exceed the promise of the exterior; but they admitted us to walk upon the battlements of the old castle, which displayed a most splendid prospect. Beneath, and far projected into the loch, were seen the woods and houses of Campbell of Lochnell. A little summer-house, upon an eminence, belonging to this wooded bank, resembles an ancient monument. On the right, Loch Etive, after pouring its waters like a furious cataract over a strait, called Connell-ferry, comes between the castle and a round island belonging to its demesne, and nearly insulates the situation. In front is a low rocky eminence on the opposite side of the arm, through which Loch Etive flows into Loch Linnhe. Here was situated *Beregenium*, once, it is said, a British capital city; and, as our informant told us, the largest market-town in Scotland. Of this splendour are no remains but a few trenches and excavations, which the distance did not allow us to examine. The ancient masonry of Dunstaffnage is mouldering fast under time and neglect. The foundations are beginning to decay, and exhibit gaps between the rock and the wall; and the battlements are become ruinous. The inner court is encumbered with ruins. A hundred pounds or two would put this very ancient fortress in a state of preservation for ages, but I fear this is not to be expected. The stumps of large trees, which had once shaded the vicinity of the castle, gave symptoms of decay in the family of Dunstaffnage. We were told of some ancient spurs and other curiosities preserved in the castle, but they were locked up. In the vicinity of the castle is a chapel which had once been elegant, but by the building up of windows, &c., is now heavy enough. I have often observed that the means adopted in Scotland for repairing old buildings are generally as destructive of their grace and beauty, as if that had been the express object. Unfortunately most churches, particularly, have gone through both stages of destruction, having been first repaired by the building-up of the beautiful shafted windows, and then the roof being suffered to fall in, they became ruins indeed, but without any touch of the picturesque farther than their massive walls and columns may afford. Near the chapel of Dunstaffnage is a remarkable echo.

"Re-embarked, and rowing about a mile and a half or better along the shore of the lake, again landed under the ruins of the old castle of Dunolly. This fortress, which, like that of Dunstaffnage, forms a marked feature in this exquisite landscape, is situated on a bold and precipitous promontory overhanging the lake. The principal part of the ruins now remaining is a square tower or keep of the ordinary size, which had been the citadel of the castle; but fragments of other buildings, overgrown with ivy, show that Dunolly had once been a place of considerable importance. These had enclosed a court-yard, of which the keep probably formed one side, the entrance being by a very steep ascent from the land side, which had formerly been cut across by a deep moat, and defended doubtless by outworks and a drawbridge. Beneath the castle stands the modern house of Dunolly, a decent mansion, suited to the reduced state of the MacDougalls of Lorn, who, from being Barons powerful enough to give battle to and defeat Robert Bruce, are now declined into private gentlemen of moderate fortune.

"This very ancient family is descended from Somerled, Thane, or rather, under that name, *King* of Argyle and the Hebrides. He had two sons, to one of whom he left his insular possessions—and he became founder of the dynasty of the Lords of the Isles, who maintained a stirring independence during the middle ages. The other was founder of the family of the MacDougalls of Lorn. One of them being married to a niece of the Red Cumming, in revenge of his slaughter at Dumfries, took a vigorous part against Robert Bruce in his struggles to maintain the independence of Scotland. At length the King, turning his whole strength towards MacDougall, encountered him at a pass near Loch Awe; but the Highlanders, being possessed of the strong ground, compelled Bruce to retreat, and again gave him battle at Dalry, near Tynedrum, where he had concentrated his forces. Here he was again defeated, and the tradition of the MacDougall family bears, that in the conflict the Lord of Lorn engaged hand to hand with Bruce, and was struck down by that monarch. As they grappled together on the ground, Bruce being uppermost, a vassal of MacDougall, called MacKeoch, relieved his master by pulling Bruce from him. In this close struggle the King left his mantle and brooch in the hands of his enemies, and the latter trophy was long preserved in the family, until it was lost in an accidental fire. Barbour tells the same story, but I think with circumstances somewhat different. When Bruce had gained the throne for which he fought so long, he displayed his resentment against the MacDougalls of Lorn, by depriving them of the greatest part of their domains, which were bestowed chiefly upon the Steward of Scotland. Sir Colin Campbell, the Knight of Loch Awe, and the Knight of Glenurchy, Sir   Campbell, married daughters of the Steward, and received with them great portion of the forfeiture of MacDougall. Bruce even compelled or persuaded the Lord of the Isles to divorce his wife, who was a daughter of MacDougall, and take in marriage a relation of his own. The son of the divorced lady was not permitted to succeed to the principality of the Isles, on account of his connexion with the obnoxious MacDougall. But a large appanage was allowed him upon the mainland, where he founded the family of Glengarry.

"The family of MacDougall suffered farther reduction during the great civil war, in which they adhered to the Stewarts, and in 1715 they forfeited the small estate of Dunolly, which was then all that remained of what had once been a principality. The then representative of the family fled to France, and his son (father of the present proprietor) would have been without any means of education, but for the spirit of clanship, which induced one of the name, in the humble situation of keeper of a public-house at Dumbarton, to take his young chief to reside with him, and be at the expense of his education and maintenance until his fifteenth or sixteenth year. He proved a clever and intelligent man, and made good use of the education he received. When the affair of 1745 was in agitation, it was expected by the south-western clans that Charles Edward would have landed near Oban, instead of which he disembarked at Loch-nan-uagh, in Arisaig. Stuart of Appin sent information of his landing to MacDougall, who gave orders to his brother to hold the clan in readiness to rise, and went himself to consult with the chamberlain of the Earl of Breadalbane, who was also in the secret. He found this person indisposed to rise, alleging that Charles had disappointed them both in the place of landing, and the support he had promised. MacDougall then resolved to play cautious, and went to visit the Duke of Argyle, then residing at Roseneath, probably without any determined purpose as to his future proceedings. While he was waiting the Duke's leisure, he saw a horseman arrive at full gallop, and shortly after, the Duke entering the apartment where MacDougall was, with a map in his hand, requested him, after friendly salutations, to point out Loch-nan-uagh on that map. MacDougall instantly saw that the secret of Charles's landing had transpired, and resolved to make a merit of being the first who should give details. The persuasions of the Duke determined him to remain quiet, and the reward was the restoration of the little estate of Dunolly, lost by his father in 1715. This gentleman lived to a very advanced stage of life, and was succeeded by Peter MacDougall, Esq., now of Dunolly. I had these particulars respecting the restoration of the estate from a near relation of the family, whom we met at Dunstaffnage.

"The modern house of Dunolly is on the neck of land under the old castle, having on the one hand the lake with its islands and mountains, on the other, two romantic eminences tufted with copsewood, of which the higher is called Barmore, and is now planted. I have seldom seen a more romantic and delightful situation, to which the peculiar state of the family gave a sort of moral interest. Mrs. MacDougall, observing strangers surveying the ruins, met us on our return, and most politely insisted upon our accepting fruit and refreshments. This was a compliment meant to absolute strangers, but when our names became known to her, the good lady's entreaties that we would stay till Mr. MacDougall returned from his ride, became very pressing. She was in deep mourning for the loss of an eldest son, who had fallen bravely in Spain and under Wellington, a death well becoming the descendant of so famed a race. The second son, a lieutenant in the navy, had, upon this family misfortune, obtained leave to visit his parents for the first time after many years' service, but had now returned to his ship. Mrs. M. spoke with melancholy pride of the death of her eldest son, with hope and animation of the prospects of the survivor. A third is educated for the law. Declining the hospitality offered us, Mrs. M. had the goodness to walk with us along the shore towards Oban, as far as the property of Dunolly extends, and showed us a fine spring, called *Tobar nan Gall*, or the Well of the Stranger, where our sailors supplied themselves with excellent water, which has been rather a scarce article with us, as it soon becomes past a landsman's use on board ship. On the sea-shore, about a quarter of a mile from the castle, is a huge fragment of the rock called *plum-pudding stone*, which art or nature has formed into a gigantic pillar. Here it is said Fion or Fingal tied his dog Bran—here also the celebrated Lord of the Isles tied up his dogs when he came upon a visit to the Lords of Lorn. Hence it is called *Clach nan Con; i. e.* the Dog's Stone. A tree grew once on the top of this bare mass of composite stone, but it was cut down by a curious damsel of the family, who was desirous to see a treasure said to be deposited beneath it. Enjoyed a pleasant walk of a mile along the beach to Oban, a town of some consequence, built in a semicircular form, around a good harbour formed by the opposite isle of Kerrera, on which Mrs. M. pointed out the place where Alexander II. died while, at the head of a powerful armament, he meditated the reduction of the Hebrides.—The field is still called Dal-ry—the King's field.

"Having taken leave of Mrs. MacDougall, we soon satisfied our curiosity concerning Oban, which owed its principal trade to the industry of two brothers, Messrs. Stevenson, who dealt in ship-building. One is now dead, the other almost retired from business, and trade is dull in the place. Heard of an active and industrious man, who had set up a nursery of young trees, which ought to succeed, since at present, whoever wants plants must send to Glasgow; and how much the plants suffer during a voyage of such length, any one may conceive. Go on board after a day delightful for the serenity and clearness of the weather, as well as for the objects we had visited. I forgot to say, that through Mr. MacDougall's absence we lost an opportunity of seeing a bronze figure of one of his ancestors, called Bacach, or *the lame*, armed and mounted as for a tournament. The hero flourished in the twelfth century. After a grand council of war, we determine, as we are so near the coast of Ulster, that we will stand over and view the celebrated Giant's Causeway: and Captain Wilson receives directions accordingly.

"2d *Sept.* 1814.—Another most beautiful day. The heat, for the first time since we sailed from Leith, is somewhat incommodious; so we spread a handsome awning, to save our complexions, God wot, and breakfast beneath it in style. The breeze is gentle, and quite favourable. It has conducted us from the extreme cape of Mull, called the Black Head of Mull, into the Sound of Ilay. We view in passing that large and fertile island, the property of Campbell of Shawfield, who has introduced an admirable style of farming among his tenants. Still farther behind us retreats the island of Jura, with the remarkable mountains called the Paps of Jura, which form a landmark at a great distance. They are very high, but in our eyes, so much accustomed of late to immense height, do not excite much surprise. Still farther astern is the small isle of Scarba, which, as we see it, seems to be a single hill. In the passage or sound between Scarba and the extremity of Jura, is a terrible run of tide, which, contending with the sunk rocks and islets of that foul channel, occasions the succession of whirlpools, called the Gulf of Corrie-vreckan. Seen at this distance we cannot judge of its terrors. The sight of Corrie-vreckan and of the low rocky isle of Colonsay, betwixt which and Ilay we are now passing, strongly recalls to my mind poor John Leyden and his tale of the Mermaid and MacPhail of Colonsay.* Probably the name of the hero should have been MacFie, for to the MacDuffies (by abridgment MacFies) Colonsay of old pertained. It is said the last of these MacDuffies was executed as an oppressor by order of the Lord of the Isles, and lies buried in the adjacent small island of Oransay, where there is an old chapel with several curious monuments, which, to avoid losing this favourable breeze, we are compelled to leave unvisited. Colonsay now belongs to a gentleman named MacNiel. On the right beyond it, opens at a distance the western coast of Mull, which we already visited in coming from the northward. We see the promontory of Ross, which is terminated by Y-Columb-kill, also now visible. The shores of Loch Tua and Ulva are in the blue distance, with the little archipelago which lies around Staffa. Still farther, the hills of Rum can just be distinguished from the blue sky. We are now arrived at the extreme point of Ilay, termed, from the strong tides, the *Runs of Ilay*. We here only feel them as a large but soft swell of the sea, the weather being delightfully clear and serene. In the course of the evening we lose sight of the Hebrides, excepting Ilay, having now attained the western side of that island.

"*3d September*, 1814.—In the morning early, we are off Innistulhan, an islet very like Inchkeith in size and appearance, and, like Inchkeith, displaying a lighthouse. Messrs. Hamilton, Duff, and Stevenson go ashore to visit the Irish lighthouse and compare notes. A fishing-boat comes off with four or five stout lads, without neckkerchiefs or hats, and the best of whose joint garments selected would hardly equip an Edinburgh beggar. Buy from this specimen of Paddy in his native land some fine John Dories for threepence each. The mainland of Ireland adjoining to this island (being part of the county of Donegal) resembles Scotland, and though hilly, seems well cultivated upon the whole. A brisk breeze directly against us. We beat to windward by assistance of a strong tide-stream, in order to weather the head of Innishowen, which covers the entrance of Lough Foyle, with the purpose of running up the loch to see Londonderry, so celebrated for its siege in 1689. But short tacks and long tacks were in vain, and at dinner-time, having lost our tide, we find ourselves at all disadvantage both against wind and sea. Much combustion at our meal, and the manœuvres by which we attempted to eat and drink remind me of the enchanted drinking-cup in the old ballad,—

'Some shed it on their shoulder,
Some shed it on their thigh;
And he that did not hit his mouth
Was sure to hit his eye.'

In the evening, backgammon and cards are in great request. We have had our guns shotted all this day for fear of the Yankees—a privateer having been seen off Tyree Islands, and taken some vessels—as is reported.—About nine o'clock weather the Innishowen head, and enter the Lough, and fire a gun as a signal for a pilot. The people here are great smugglers; and at the report of the gun, we see several lights on shore disappear.—About the middle of the day too, our appearance (much resembling a revenue cutter) occasioned a smoke being made in the midst of a very rugged cliff on the shore—a signal probably to any of the smugglers' craft that might be at sea. Come to anchor in eight fathom water, expecting our pilot.

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* See Minstrelsy of the Border—Scott's Poetical Works, vol. iv., pp. 285–306.

"*4th September*, 1814.—Waked in the morning with good hope of hearing service in Derry Cathedral, as we had felt ourselves under weigh since daylight; but these expectations vanished when, going on deck, we found ourselves only half-way up Lough Foyle, and at least ten miles from Derry. Very little wind, and that against us; and the navigation both shoally and intricate. Called a council of war; and after considering the difficulty of getting up to Derry, and the chance of being wind-bound when we do get there, we resolve to renounce our intended visit to that town. We had hardly put the ship about, when the Irish Æolus shifted his trumpet, and opposed our exit, as he had formerly been unfavourable to our progress up the lake. At length, we are compelled to betake ourselves to towing, the wind fading into an absolute calm. This gives us time enough to admire the northern, or Donegal, side of Lough Foyle—the other being hidden from us by haze and distance. Nothing can be more favourable than this specimen of Ireland.—A beautiful variety of cultivated slopes, intermixed with banks of wood; rocks skirted with a distant ridge of heathy hills, watered by various brooks; the glens or banks being, in general, planted or covered with copse; and finally, studded by a succession of villas and gentlemen's seats, good farm-houses, and neat white-washed cabins. Some of the last are happily situated upon the verge of the sea, with banks of copse or a rock or two rising behind them, and the white sand in front. The land, in general, seems well cultivated and enclosed—but in some places the enclosures seem too small, and the ridges too crooked, for proper farming. We pass two gentlemen's seats, called White Castle and Red Castle; the last a large good-looking mansion, with trees, and a pretty vale sloping upwards from the sea. As we approach the termination of the Lough, the ground becomes more rocky and barren, and the cultivation interrupted by impracticable patches, which have been necessarily abandoned. Come in view of Green Castle, a large ruinous castle, said to have belonged to the Macwilliams. The remains are romantically situated upon a green bank sloping down to the sea, and are partly covered with ivy. From their extent, the place must have been a chieftain's residence of the very first consequence. Part of the ruins appear to be founded upon a high red rock, which the eye at first blends with the masonry. To the east of the ruins, upon a cliff overhanging the sea, are a modern fortification and barrack-yard, and beneath, a large battery for protection of the shipping which may enter the Lough; the guns are not yet mounted. The Custom-house boat boards us and confirms the account that American cruisers are upon the coast. Drift out of the Lough, and leave behind us this fine country, all of which belongs in property to Lord Donegal; other possessors only having long leases, as sixty years, or so forth. Red Castle, however, before distinguished as a very good-looking house, is upon a perpetual lease. We discharge our pilot—the gentlemen go ashore with him in the boat, in order to put foot on Irish land. I shall defer that pleasure till I can promise myself something to see. When our gentlemen return, we read prayers on deck. After dinner go ashore at the small fishing-village of Port Rush, pleasantly situated upon a peninsula, which forms a little harbour. Here we are received by Dr. Richardson, the inventor of the fiorin-grass (or of some of its excellencies). He cultivates this celebrated vegetable on a very small scale, his whole farm not exceeding four acres. Here I learn, with inexpressible surprise and distress, the death of one of the most valued of the few friends whom these memoranda might interest.* She was, indeed, a rare example of the soundest good sense, and the most exquisite purity of moral feeling, united with the utmost grace and elegance of personal beauty, and with manners becoming the most dignified rank in British society. There was a feminine softness in all her deportment, which won universal love, as her firmness of mind and correctness of principle commanded veneration. To her family her loss is inexpressibly great. I know not whether it was the purity of her mind or the ethereal cast of her features and form, but I could never associate in my mind her idea and that of mortality; so that the shock is the more heavy, as being totally unexpected. God grant comfort to the afflicted survivor and his family!

"*5th September*, 1814.—Wake, or rather rise at six, for I have waked the whole night, or fallen into broken sleeps only to be hag-ridden by the night-mare. Go ashore with a heavy heart, to see sights which I had much rather leave alone. Land under Dunluce, a ruined castle built by the MacGilligans, or MacQuillens, but afterwards taken from them by a Macdonnell, ancestor of the earls of Antrim, and destroyed by Sir John Perrot, Lord-Lieutenant in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. This Macdonnell came from the Hebrides at the head of a Scottish colony. The site of the castle much resembles Dunnottar, but is on a smaller scale. The ruins occupy perhaps more than an acre of ground, being the level top of a high rock advanced into the sea, by which it is surrounded on three sides, and divided from the mainland by a deep chasm. The access was by a narrow bridge, of which there now remains but a single rib or ledge, forming a doubtful and a precarious access to the ruined castle. On the outer side of the bridge are large remains of outworks, probably for securing cattle, and for domestic offices—and the vestiges of a chapel. Beyond the bridge are an outer and inner gateway, with their defences. The large gateway forms one angle of the square enclosure of the fortress, and at the other landward angle is built a large round tower. There are vestiges of similar towers occupying the angles of the precipice overhanging the sea. These towers were connected by a curtain, on which artillery seems to have been mounted. Within this circuit are the ruins of an establishment of feudal grandeur on the large scale. The great hall, forming, it would seem, one side of the inner court, is sixty paces long, lighted by windows which appear to have been shafted with stone, but are now ruined. Adjacent are the great kitchen and ovens, with a variety of other buildings, but no square tower, or keep. The most remarkable part of Dunluce, however, is, that the whole mass of plum-pudding rock on which the fort is built, is completely perforated by a cave sloping downwards from the inside of the moat or dry-ditch beneath the bridge, and opening to the sea on the other side. It might serve the purpose of a small harbour, especially if they had, as is believed, a descent to the cave from within the castle. It is difficult to conceive the use of the aperture to the land, unless it was in some way enclosed and defended. Above the ruinous castle is a neat farm-house. Mrs. More, the goodwife, a Scoto-Hibernian, received us with kindness and hospitality which did honour to the nation of her birth, as well as of her origin, in a house whose cleanliness and neatness might have rivalled England. Her churn was put into immediate motion on our behalf, and we were loaded with all manner of courtesy, as well as good things. We heard here of an armed schooner having been seen off the coast yesterday, which fired on a boat that went off to board her, and would seem therefore to be a privateer, or armed smuggler.

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* Harriet, Duchess of Buccleuch, died Aug. 24, 1814.

" Return on board for breakfast, and then again take boat for the Giants' Causeway—having first shotted the guns, and agreed on a signal, in case this alarming stranger should again make his appearance. Visit two caves, both worth seeing, but not equal to those we have seen; one, called Port Coon, opens in a small cove, or bay—the outer reach opens into an inner cave, and that again into the sea. The other, called Down Kerry, is a sea-cave, like that on the eastern side of Loch Eribol—a high arch, up which the sea rolls :—the weather being quiet, we sailed in very nearly to the upper end. We then rowed on to the celebrated Causeway, a platform composed of basaltic pillars, projecting into the sea like the pier of a harbour. As I was tired, and had a violent headach, I did not land, but could easily see that the regularity of the columns was the same as at Staffa; but that island contains a much more extensive and various specimen of this curious phenomenon.

" Row along the shores of this celebrated point, which are extremely striking as well as curious. They open into a succession of little bays, each of which has precipitous banks graced with long ranges of the basaltic pillars, sometimes placed above each other, and divided by masses of interweaving strata, or by green sloping banks of earth of extreme steepness. These remarkable ranges of columns are in some places chequered by horizontal strata of a red rock or earth, of the appearance of ochre ; so that the green of the grassy banks, the dark-grey or black appearance of the columns, with those red seams and other varieties of the interposed strata, have most uncommon and striking effects. The outline of these cliffs is as singular as their colouring. In several places the earth has wasted away from single columns, and left them standing insulated and erect, like the ruined colonnade of an ancient temple, upon the verge of the precipice. In other places, the disposition of the basaltic ranges presents singular appearances, to which the guides give names agreeable to the images which they are supposed to represent. Each of the little bays or inlets has also its appropriate name. One is called the Spanish Bay, from one of the Spanish Armada having been wrecked there. Thus our voyage has repeatedly traced the memorable remnants of that celebrated squadron. The general name of the cape adjacent to the Causeway, is Bengore Head. To those who have seen Staffa, the peculiar appearance of the Causeway itself will lose much of its effect; but the grandeur of the neighbouring scenery will still maintain the reputation of Bengore Head. The people ascribe all these wonders to Fin MacCoul, whom they couple with a Scottish giant called Ben-an something or other. The traveller is plied by guides, who make their profit by selling pieces of crystal, agate, or chalcedony, found in the interstices of the rocks. Our party brought off some curious joints of the columns, and, had I been quite as I am wont to be, I would have selected four to be capitals of a rustic porch at Abbotsford. But, alas! alas! I am much out of love with vanity at this moment. From what we hear at the Causeway, we have every reason to think that the pretended privateer has been a gentleman's pleasure-vessel.—Continue our voyage southward, and pass between the Main of Ireland and the Isle of Rachrin, a rude heathy-looking island, once a place of refuge to Robert Bruce. This is said, in ancient times, to have been the abode of banditti, who plundered the neighbouring coast. At present it is under a long lease to a Mr. Gage, who is said to maintain excellent order among the islanders. Those of bad character he expels to Ireland, and hence it is a phrase among the people of Rachrin, when they wish ill to any one, '*May Ireland be his hinder end.*' On the Main, we see the village of Ballintry, and a number of people collected, the remains of an Irish fair. Close by is a small islet, called Sheep Island. We now take leave of the Irish coast, having heard nothing of its popular complaints, excepting that the good lady at Dunluce made a heavy moan against the tithes, which had compelled her husband to throw his whole farm into pasture. Stand over toward Scotland, and see the Mull of Cantyre light.

"*6th September*, 1814.—Under the light-house at the Mull of Cantyre; situated on a desolate spot among rocks, like a Chinese pagoda in Indian drawings. Duff and Stevenson go ashore at six. Hamilton follows, but is unable to land, the sea having got up. The boat brings back letters, and I have the great comfort to learn all are well at Abbotsford. About eight the tide begins to run very strong, and the wind rising at the same time, makes us somewhat apprehensive for our boat, which had returned to attend D. and S. We observe them set off along the hills on foot, to walk, as we understand, to a bay called Carskey, five or six miles off, but the nearest spot at which they can hope to re-embark in this state of the weather. It now becomes very squally, and one of our jib-sails splits. We are rather awkwardly divided into three parties—the pedestrians on shore, with whom we now observe Captain Wilson, mounted npon a pony—the boat with four sailors, which is stealing along in-shore, unable to row, and scarce venturing to carry any sail—and we in the yacht, tossing about most exceedingly. At length we reach Carskey, a quiet-looking bay, where the boat gets into shore, and fetches off our gentlemen. After this the coast of Cantyre seems cultivated and arable, but bleak and unenclosed, like many other parts of Scotland. We then learn that we have been repeatedly in the route of two American privateers, who have made many captures in the Irish Channel, particularly at Innistruhul, at the back of Islay, and on the Lewis. They are the Peacock, of twenty-two guns, and 165 men, and a schooner of eighteen guns, called the Prince of Neufchatel. These news, added to the increasing inclemency of the weather, induce us to defer a projected visit to the coast of Galloway; and indeed it is time one of us was home on many accounts. We therefore resolve, after visiting the lighthouse at Pladda, to proceed for Greenock. About four drop anchor off Pladda, a small islet lying on the south side of Arran. Go ashore and visit the establishment. When we return on board, the wind being unfavourable for the mouth of Clyde, we resolve to weigh anchor and go into Lamlash Bay.

"*7th September*, 1814.—We had ample room to repent last night's resolution, for the wind, with its usual caprice, changed so soon as we had weighed anchor, blew very hard, and almost directly against us, so that we were beating up against it by short tacks, which made a most disagreeable night; as between the noise of the wind and the sea, the clattering of the ropes and sails above, and of the moveables below, and the eternal '*ready about*,' which was repeated every ten minutes when the vessel was about to tack, with the lurch and clamour which succeeds, sleep was much out of the question. We are not now in the least sick, but want of sleep is uncomfortable, and I have no agreeable reflections to amuse waking hours, excepting the hope of again rejoining my family. About six o'clock went on deck to see Lamlash Bay, which we have at length reached after a hard struggle. The morning is fine and the wind abated, so that the coast of Arran looks extremely well. It is indented with two deep bays. That called Lamlash, being covered by an island with an entrance at either end, makes a secure roadstead. The other bay, which takes its name from Brodick Castle, a seat of the Duke of Hamilton, is open. The situation of the castle is very fine, among extensive plantations, laid out with perhaps too much formality, but pleasant to the eye, as the first tract of plantation we have seen for a long time. One stripe, however, with singular want of taste, runs straight up a finely-rounded hill, and turning by an obtuse angle, cuts down the opposite side with equal lack of remorse. This vile habit of opposing the line of the plantation to the natural line and bearing of the ground, is one of the greatest practical errors of early planters. As to the rest, the fields about Brodick, and the lowland of Arran in general, seem rich, well enclosed, and in good cultivation. Behind and around rise an amphitheatre of mountains, the principal a long ridge with fine swelling serrated tops, called Goat-Fell. Our wind now altogether dies away, while we want its assistance to get to the mouth of the Firth of Clyde, now opening between the extremity of the large and fertile Isle of Bute, and the lesser islands called the Cumbrays. The fertile coast of Ayrshire trends away to the south-westward, displaying many villages and much appearance of beauty and cultivation. On the north-eastward arises the bold and magnificent screen formed by the mountains of Argyleshire and Dunbartonshire, rising above each other in gigantic succession. About noon, a favourable breath of wind enables us to enter the mouth of the Clyde, passing between the larger Cumbray and the extremity of Bute. As we advance beyond the Cumbray and open the opposite coast, see Largs, renowned for the final defeat of the Norwegian invaders by Alexander III. [A. D. 1263.] The ground of battle was a sloping, but rather gentle ascent from the sea, above the modern Kirk of Largs. Had Haco gained the victory, it would have opened all the south-west of Scotland to his arms. On Bute, a fine and well-improved island, we open the Marquis of Bute's house of Mount Stewart, neither apparently large nor elegant in architecture, but beautifully situated among well-grown trees, with an open and straight avenue to the sea-shore. The whole isle is prettily varied by the rotation of crops: and the rocky ridges of Goat-Fell and other mountains in Arran are now seen behind Bute as a back-ground. These ridges resemble much the romantic and savage outline of the mountains of Cuillin, in Skye. On the southward of Largs is Kelburn, the seat of Lord Glasgow, with extensive plantations; on the northward Skelmorlie, an ancient seat of the Montgomeries. The Firth, closed to appearance by Bute and the Cumbrays, now resembles a long irregular inland lake, bordered on the one side by the low and rich coast of Renfrewshire, studded with villages and seats, and on the other by the Highland mountains. Our breeze dies totally away, and leaves us to admire this prospect till sunset. I learn incidentally, that, in the opinion of honest Captain Wilson, I have been myself the cause of all this contradictory weather. 'It is all,' says the Captain to Stevenson, 'owing to the cave at the Isle of Egg,'—from which I had abstracted a skull. Under this odium I may labour yet longer, for assuredly the weather has been doggedly unfavourable. Night quiet and serene, but dead calm—a fine contrast to the pitching, rolling, and walloping of last night.

"*8th September.*—Waked very much in the same situation—a dead calm, but the weather very serene. With much difficulty, and by the assistance of the tide, we advanced up the Firth, and passing the village of Gourock, at length reached Greenock. Took an early dinner, and embarked in the steam-boat for Glasgow. We took leave of our little yacht under the repeated cheers of the sailors, who had been much pleased with their erratic mode of travelling about, so different from the tedium of a regular voyage. After we reached Glasgow—a journey which we performed at the rate of about eight miles an hour, and with a smoothness of motion which probably resembles flying—we supped together and prepared to separate.—Erskine and I go to-morrow to the Advocate's at Killermont, and thence to Edinburgh. So closes my Journal. But I must not omit to say, that among five or six persons, some of whom were doubtless different in tastes and pursuits, there did not occur, during the close communication of more than six weeks aboard a small vessel, the slightest difference of opinion. Each seemed anxious to submit his own wishes to those of his friends. The consequence was, that by judicious arrangement all were gratified in their turn, and frequently he who made some sacrifices to the views of his companions, was rewarded by some unexpected gratification calculated particularly for his own amusement. Thus ends my little excursion, in which, bating one circumstance, which must have made me miserable for the time wherever I had learned it, I have enjoyed as much pleasure as in any six weeks of my life. We had constant exertion, a succession of wild and uncommon scenery, good humour on board, and objects of animation and interest when we went ashore—

'Sed fugit interea—fugit irrevocabile tempus.'"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LETTER IN VERSE FROM ZETLAND AND ORKNEY—DEATH OF THE DUCHESS OF BUCCLEUCH—CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE DUKE—ALTRIVE LAKE—NEGOTIATION CONCERNING THE LORD OF THE ISLES COMPLETED—SUCCESS OF WAVERLEY—CONTEMPORANEOUS CRITICISMS ON THE NOVEL—LETTERS TO SCOTT FROM MR. MORRITT—MR. LEWIS—AND MISS MACLEAN CLEPHANE—LETTER FROM JAMES BALLANTYNE TO MISS EDGEWORTH.—1814.

I QUESTION if any man ever drew his own character more fully or more pleasingly than Scott has done in the preceding diary of a six weeks' pleasure voyage. We have before us, according to the scene and occasion, the poet, the antiquary, the magistrate, the planter, and the agriculturist; but everywhere the warm yet sagacious philanthropist — everywhere the courtesy, based on the unselfishness, of the thoroughbred gentleman;—and surely never was the tenderness of a manly heart portrayed more touchingly than in the closing pages. I ought to mention that Erskine received the news of the Duchess of Buccleuch's death on the day when the party landed at Dunstaffnage; but, knowing how it would affect Scott, took means to prevent its reaching him until the expedition should be concluded. He heard the event casually mentioned by a stranger during dinner at Port Rush, and was for the moment quite overpowered.

Of the letters which Scott wrote to his friends during those happy six weeks, I have recovered only one, and it is, thanks to the leisure of the yacht, in verse. The strong and easy heroics of the first section prove, I think, that Mr. Canning did not err when he told him that if he chose he might emulate even Dryden's command of that noble measure; and the dancing anapæsts of the second show that he could with equal facility have rivalled the gay graces of Cotton, Anstey, or Moore. This epistle did not reach the Duke of Buccleuch until his lovely Duchess was no more; and I shall annex to it some communications relating to that affliction which afford a contrast, not less interesting than melancholy, to the light-hearted glee reflected in the rhymes from the region of Magnus Troill.

To his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c. &c. &c.

"Lighthouse Yacht in the Sound of Lerwick, Zetland, 8th August, 1814.

"Health to the Chieftain from his clansman true!
From her true minstrel health to fair Buccleuch!

Health from the isles, where dewy Morning weaves
Her chaplet with the tints that Twilight leaves;
Where late the sun scarce vanished from the sight,
And his bright pathway graced the short-lived night,
Though darker now as autumn's shades extend,
The north winds whistle and the mists ascend.
Health from the land where eddying whirlwinds toss
The storm-rocked *cradle* of the Cape of Noss;
On outstretched cords the giddy engine slides,
His own strong arm the bold adventurer guides,
And he that lists such desperate feat to try,
May, like the sea-mew, skim 'twixt surf and sky,
And feel the mid-air gales around him blow,
And see the billows rage five hundred feet below.

" Here by each stormy peak and desert shore,
The hardy islesman tugs the daring oar,
Practised alike his venturous course to keep
Through the white breakers or the pathless deep,
By ceaseless peril and by toil to gain
A wretched pittance from the niggard main.
And when the worn-out drudge old ocean leaves,
What comfort greets him and what hut receives?
Lady! the worst your presence ere has cheered
(When want and sorrow fled as you appeared)
Were to a Zetlander as the high dome
Of proud Drumlanrig to my humble home.
Here rise no groves, and here no gardens blow,
Here even the hardy heath scarce dares to grow;
But rocks on rocks, in mist and storm arrayed,
Stretch far to sea their giant colonnade,
With many a cavern seam'd, the dreary haunt
Of the dun seal and swarthy cormorant.
Wild round their rifted brows with frequent cry,
As of lament, the gulls and gannets fly,
And from their sable base, with sullen sound,
In sheets of whitening foam the waves rebound.

" Yet even these coasts a touch of envy gain
From those whose land has known oppression's chain;
For here the industrious Dutchman comes once more
To moor his fishing craft by Bressay's shore;
Greets every former mate and brother tar,
Marvels how Lerwick 'scaped the rage of war,
Tells many a tale of Gallic outrage done,
And ends by blessing God and Wellington.
Here too the Greenland tar, a fiercer guest,
Claims a brief hour of riot, not of rest;
Proves each wild frolic that in wine has birth,
And wakes the land with brawls and boisterous mirth.
A sadder sight on yon poor vessel's prow
The captive Norse-man sits in silent woe,
And eyes the flags of Britain as they flow.
Hard fate of war, which bade her terrors sway
His destined course, and seize so mean a prey;
A bark with planks so warp'd and seams so riven,
She scarce might face the gentlest airs of heaven:
Pensive he sits, and questions oft if none
Can list his speech and understand his moan;
In vain—no islesman now can use the tongue
Of the bold Norse, from whom their lineage sprung.
Not thus of old the Norse-men hither came,
Won by the love of danger or of fame;
On every storm-beat cape a shapeless tower
Tells of their wars, their conquests, and their power;

For ne'er for Grecia's vales, nor Latian Land,
Was fiercer strife than for this barren strand—
A race severe—the isle and ocean lords,
Loved for its own delight the strife of swords—
With scornful laugh the mortal pang defied,
And blessed their gods that they in battle died.

"Such were the sires of Zetland's simple race,
And still the eye may faint resemblance trace
In the blue eye, tall form, proportion fair,
The limbs athletic, and the long light hair—
(Such was the mien, as Scald and Minstrel sings,
Of fair-haired Harold, first of Norway's Kings);
But their high deeds to scale these crags confined,
Their only warfare is with waves and wind.

"Why should I talk of Mousa's castled coast?
Why of the horrors of the Sumburgh Rost?
May not these bald disjointed lines suffice,
Penn'd while my comrades whirl the rattling dice—
While down the cabin skylight lessening shine
The rays, and eve is chased with mirth and wine?—
Imagined, while down Mousa's desert bay
Our well-trimm'd vessel urged her nimble way—
While to the freshening breeze she leaned her side—
And bade her bowsprit kiss the foamy tide—?

"Such are the lays that Zetland Isles supply;
Drenched with the drizzly spray and dropping sky,
Weary and wet, a sea-sick minstrel I.—— W. SCOTT."

"*Postscriptum.*

"Kirkwall, Orkney, Aug. 13, 1814.

"In respect that your Grace has commissioned a Kraken,
You will please be informed that they seldom are taken;
It is January two years, the Zetland folks say,
Since they saw the last Kraken in Scalloway bay:
He lay in the offing a fortnight or more,
But the devil a Zetlander put from the shore,
Though bold in the seas of the North to assail
The morse and the sea-horse, the grampus and whale.
If your Grace thinks I'm writing the thing that is not,
You may ask at a namesake of ours, Mr. Scott—
(He's not of our clan, though his merits deserve it,
But springs, I'm inform'd, from the Scotts of Scotstarvet);*
He questioned the folks, who beheld it with eyes,
But they differed confoundedly as to its size.
For instance, the modest and diffident swore
That it seemed like the keel of a ship, and no more—
Those of eyesight more clear, or of fancy more high,
Said it rose like an island 'twixt ocean and sky—
But all of the hulk had a steady opinion
That 'twas sure a *live* subject of Neptune's dominion—
And I think, my Lord Duke, your Grace hardly would wish
To cumber your house such a kettle of fish.
Had your order related to night-caps or hose,
Or mittens of worsted, there's plenty of those.
Or would you be pleased but to fancy a whale?
And direct me to send it—by sea or by mail?
The season, I'm told, is nigh over, but still
I could get you one fit for the lake at Bowhill.
Indeed, as to whales, there's no need to be thrifty,
Since one day last fortnight two hundred and fifty,

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* The Scotts of Scotstarvet, and other families of the name in Fife and elsewhere, claim no kindred with the great clan of the Border—and their armorial bearings are entirely different.

Pursued by seven Orkneymen's boats and no more,
Betwixt Truffness and Luffness were drawn on the shore!
You'll ask if I saw this same wonderful sight;
I own that I did not, but easily might—
For this mighty shoal of leviathans lay
On our lee-beam a mile, in the loop of the bay,
And the islesmen of Sanda were all at the spoil,
And *flinching* (so term it) the blubber to boil;
(Ye spirits of lavender drown the reflection
That awakes at the thoughts of this odorous dissection).
To see this huge marvel, full fain would we go,
But Wilson, the wind, and the current said no.
We have now got to Kirkwall, and needs I must stare
When I think that in verse I have once called it *fair;*
'Tis a base little borough, both dirty and mean—
There is nothing to hear, and there's nought to be seen,
Save a church, where, of old times, a prelate harangued
And a palace that's built by an earl that was hanged.
But farewell to Kirkwall—aboard we are going,
The anchor's a-peak, and the breezes are blowing;
Our Commodore calls all his band to their places,
And 'tis time to release you—good night to your Graces!"

To his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c.

"Glasgow, Sept. 8, 1814.

"My dear Lord Duke,

"I take the earliest opportunity, after landing, to discharge a task so distressing to me, that I find reluctance and fear even in making the attempt, and for the first time address so kind and generous a friend without either comfort and confidence in myself, or the power of offering a single word of consolation to his affliction. I learned the late calamitous news (which indeed no preparation could have greatly mitigated) quite unexpectedly, when upon the Irish coast; nor could the shock of an earthquake have affected me in the same proportion. Since that time I have been detained at sea, thinking of nothing but what has happened, and of the painful duty I am now to perform. If the deepest interest in this inexpressible loss could qualify me in expressing myself upon a subject so distressing, I know few whose attachment and respect for the lamented object of our sorrows can, or ought to exceed my own, for never was more attractive kindness and condescension displayed by one in her sphere, or returned with deeper and more heartfelt gratitude by one in my own. But selfish regret and sorrow, while they claim a painful and unavailing ascendance, cannot drown the recollection of the virtues lost to the world, just when their scene of acting had opened wider, and to her family when the prospect of their speedy entry upon life rendered her precept and example peculiarly important. And such an example! for of all whom I have ever seen, in whatever rank, she possessed most the power of rendering virtue lovely—combining purity of feeling and soundness of judgment with a sweetness and affability which won the affections of all who had the happiness of approaching her. And this is the partner of whom it has been God's pleasure to deprive your Grace, and the friend for whom I now sorrow, and shall sorrow while I can remember any thing. The recollection of her excellencies can but add bitterness, at least in the first pangs of calamity, yet it is impossible to forbear the topic: it runs to my pen as to my thoughts, till I almost call in question, for an instant, the Eternal Wisdom which has so early summoned her from this wretched world, where pain and grief and sorrow is our portion, to join those to whom her virtues, while upon earth, gave her so strong a resemblance. Would to God I could say, *be comforted;* but I feel every common topic of consolation must be, for the time at least, even an irritation to affliction. Grieve, then, my dear Lord, or I should say my dear and much honoured friend, for sorrow for the time levels the highest distinctions of rank; but do not grieve as those who have no hope. I know the last earthly thoughts of the departed sharer of your joys and sorrows must have been for your Grace and the dear pledges she has left to your care. Do not, for their sake, suffer grief to take that exclusive possession which disclaims care for the living, and is not only useless to the dead, but is what their wishes would have most earnestly deprecated. To time, and to God, whose are both time and eternity, belongs the office of future consolation; it is enough to require from the sufferer under such a dispensation to bear his burthen of sorrow with fortitude, and to resist those feelings which prompt us to believe that that which is galling and grievous is therefore altogether beyond our strength to support. Most bitterly do I regret some levity which I fear must have reached you when your distress was most poignant, and most dearly have I paid for venturing to anticipate the time which is not ours, since I received these deplorable news at the very moment when I was collecting some trifles that I thought might give satisfaction to the person whom I so highly honoured, and who, among her numerous excellencies, never failed to seem pleased with what she knew was meant to afford her pleasure.

"But I must break off, and have perhaps already written too much. I learn by a letter from Mrs. Scott, this day received, that your Grace is at Bowhill—in the beginning of next week I will be in the vicinity—and when your Grace can receive me without additional pain, I shall have the honour of waiting upon you. I remain, with the deepest sympathy, my Lord Duke, your Grace's truly distressed and most grateful servant, WALTER SCOTT."

The following letter was addressed to Scott by the Duke of Buccleuch, before he received that which the poet penned on landing at Glasgow. I present it here, because it will give a more exact notion of what Scott's relations with his noble patron really were, than any other single document which I could produce; and to set that matter in its just light is essential to the business of this narrative. But I am not ashamed to confess that I embrace with satisfaction the opportunity of thus offering to the readers of the present time a most instructive lesson. They will here see what pure and simple virtues and humble piety may be cultivated as the only sources of real comfort in this world and consolation in the prospect of futurity,—among circles which the giddy and envious mob are apt to regard as intoxicated with the pomps and vanities of wealth and rank; which so many of our popular writers represent systematically as sunk in selfish indulgence—as viewing all below them with apathy and indifference—and last, not least, as upholding, when they do uphold, the religious institutions of their country, merely because they have been taught to believe that their own hereditary privileges and possessions derive security from the prevalence of Christian maxims and feelings among the mass of the people.

To Walter Scott, Esq., Post Office, Greenock.

"Bowhill, September 3, 1814.

"My dear Sir,

"It is not with the view of distressing you with my griefs, in order to relieve my own feelings, that I address you at this moment. But knowing your attachment to myself, and more particularly the real affection which you bore to my poor wife, I thought that a few lines from me would be acceptable, both to explain the state of my mind at present, and to mention a few circumstances connected with that melancholy event.

"I am calm and resigned. The blow was so severe that it stunned me, and I did not feel that agony of mind which might have been expected. I now see the full extent of my misfortune; but that extended view of it has come gradually upon me. I am fully aware how imperative it is upon me to exert myself to the utmost on account of my children. I must not depress their spirits by a display of my own melancholy feelings. I have many new duties to perform,—or rather, perhaps, I now feel more pressingly the obligation of duties which the unceasing exertions of my poor wife rendered less necessary, or induced me to attend to with less than sufficient accuracy. I have been taught a severe lesson; it may and ought to be a useful one. I feel that my lot, though a hard one, is accompanied by many alleviations denied to others. I have a numerous family, thank God, in health, and profiting, according to their different ages, by the admirable lessons they have been taught. My daughter, Anne, worthy of so excellent a mother, exerts herself to the utmost to supply her place, and has displayed a fortitude and strength of mind beyond her years, and (as I had foolishly thought) beyond her powers. I have most kind friends, willing and ready to afford me every assistance. These are my worldly comforts, and they are numerous and great.

"Painful as it may be, I cannot reconcile it to myself to be totally silent as to the last scene of this cruel tragedy. As she had lived, so she died—an example of every noble feeling—of love, attachment, and the total want of every thing selfish. Endeavouring to the last to conceal her suffering, she evinced a fortitude, a resignation, a Christian courage, beyond all power of description. Her last injunction was to attend to her poor people. It was a dreadful but instructive moment. I have learned that the most truly heroic spirit may be lodged in the tenderest and the gentlest breast. Need I tell *you* that she expired in the full hope and expectation, nay, in the firmest certainty of passing to a better world, through a steady reliance on her Saviour. If ever there was a proof of the efficacy of our religion in moments of the deepest affliction, and in the hour of death, it was exemplified in her conduct. But I will no longer dwell upon a subject which must be painful to you. Knowing her sincere friendship for you, I have thought it would give you pleasure, though a melancholy one, to hear from me that her last moments were such as to be envied by every lover of virtue, piety, and true and genuine religion.

"I will endeavour to do in all things what I know she would wish. I have therefore determined to lay myself open to all the comforts my friends can afford me. I shall be most happy to cultivate their society as heretofore. I shall love them more and more because I know they loved her. Whenever it suits your convenience I shall be happy to see you here. I feel that it is particularly my duty not to make my house the house of mourning to my children; for I know it was *her* decided opinion that it is most mischievous to give an early impression of gloom to the mind.

"You will find me tranquil, and capable of going through the common occupations of society. Adieu for the present. Yours very sincerely,

BUCCLEUCH, &c."

To His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c. &c. &c.

"Edinburgh, 11th September, 1814.

"My dear Lord Duke,

"I received your letter (which had missed me at Greenock) upon its being returned to this place, and cannot sufficiently express my gratitude for the kindness which, at such a moment, could undertake the task of writing upon such a subject to relieve the feelings of a friend. Depend upon it, I am so far worthy of your Grace's kindness that, among many proofs of it, this affecting and most distressing one can never be forgotten. It gives me great though melancholy satisfaction, to find that your Grace has had the manly and Christian fortitude to adopt that resigned and patient frame of spirit, which can extract from the most bitter calamity a wholesome mental medicine. I trust in God that, as so many and such high duties are attached to your station, and he has blessed you with the disposition that draws pleasure from the discharge of them, your Grace will find your first exertions, however painful, rewarded with strength to persevere, and finally, with that comfort which attends perseverance in that which is right. The happiness of hundreds depends upon your Grace almost directly, and the effect of your example in the country, and of your constancy in support of a constitution daily undermined by the wicked and designing, is almost incalculable. Justly, then, and well has your Grace resolved to sacrifice all that is selfish in the indulgence of grief, to the duties of your social and public situation. Long may you have health and strength to be to your dear and hopeful family an example and guide in all that becomes their high rank. It is enough that one light, and, alas, what a light that was! has been recalled by the Divine Will to another and a better sphere.

"I wrote a hasty and unconnected letter immediately on landing. I am detained for two days in this place, but shall wait upon your Grace immediately on my return to Abbotsford. If my society cannot, in the circumstances, give much pleasure, it will, I trust, impose no restraint.

"Mrs. Scott desires me to offer her deepest sympathy upon this calamitous occasion. She has much reason, for she has lost the countenance of a friend such as she cannot expect the course of human life again to supply. I am ever, with much and affectionate respect, your Grace's truly faithful humble servant,

Walter Scott."

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M. P., Worthing.

'Edinburgh, September 14, 1814.

"My dear Morritt,

"'At the end of my tour on the 22d August'!!! Lord help us!—this comes of going to the Levant and the Hellespont, and your Euxine, and so forth. A poor devil who goes to Nova Zembla and Thule is treated as if he had been only walking as far as Barnard Castle or Cauldshiel's Loch.* I would have you to know I only returned on the 10th current, and the most agreeable thing I found was your letter. I am sure you must know I had need of something pleasant, for the news of the death of the beautiful, the kind, the affectionate, and generous Duchess of Buccleuch gave me a shock, which, to speak God's truth, could not have been exceeded unless by my own family's sustaining a similar deprivation. She was indeed a light set upon a hill, and had all the grace which the most accomplished manners and the most affable address could give to those virtues by which she was raised still higher than by rank. As she always distinguished me by her regard and confidence, and as I had many opportunities of seeing her in the active discharge of duties in which she rather resembled a descended angel than an earthly being, you will excuse my saying so much about my own feelings on an occasion where sorrow has been universal. But I will drop the subject. The survivor has displayed a strength and firmness of mind seldom equalled, where the affection has been so strong and mutual, and amidst the very high station and commanding fortune which so often render self-control more difficult, because so far from being habitual. I trust for his own sake, as well as for that of thousands to whom his life is directly essential, and hundreds of thousands to whom his example is important, that God, as he has given him fortitude to bear this inexpressible shock, will add strength of constitution to support him in the struggle. He has written to me on the occasion in a style becoming a man and a Christian, submissive to the will of God, and willing to avail himself of the consolations which remain among his family and friends. I am going to see him, and how we shall meet, God knows; but though 'an iron man of iron mould' upon many of the occasions of life in which I see people most affected, and a peculiar contemner of the commonplace sorrow which I see paid to the departed, this is a case in which my stoicism will not serve me. They both gave me reason to think they loved me, and I returned their regard with the most sincere attachment—the distinction of rank being, I think, set apart on all sides. But God's will be done. I will dwell no longer upon this subject. It is much to learn that Mrs. Morritt is so much better, and that if I have sustained a severe wound from a quarter so little expected, I may promise myself the happiness of your dear wife's recovery.

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* Lord Byron writes to Mr. Moore, August 3, 1814:—"Oh! I have had the most amusing letter from Hogg, the Ettrick Minstrel and Shepherd. I think very highly of him as a poet, but he and half of these Scotch and Lake troubadours are spoilt by living in little circles and petty coteries. London and the world is the only place to take the conceit out of a man—in the milling phrase. Scott, he says, is gone to the Orkneys in a gale of wind, during which wind, he affirms, the said Scott he is sure is not at his ease, to say the least of it. Lord! Lord! if these home-keeping minstrels had crossed your Atlantic or my Mediterranean, and tasted a little open boating in a white squall—or a gale in 'the Gut,'—or the Bay of Biscay, with no gale at all—how it would enliven and introduce them to a few of the sensations!—to say nothing of an illicit amour or two upon shore, in the way of Essay upon the Passions, beginning with simple adultery, and compounding it as they went along." *Life and Works, vol. iii. p.* 102. Lord Byron, by the way, had written on July the 24th to Mr. Murray, "Waverley is the best and most interesting novel I have redde since—I don't know when," &c. *Ibid, p.* 98.

"I will shortly mention the train of our voyage, reserving particulars till another day. We sailed from Leith and skirted the Scottish coast, visiting the Buller of Buchan and other remarkable objects—went to Shetland—thence to Orkney—from thence round Cape Wrath to the Hebrides, making descents everywhere, where there was any thing to be seen—thence to Lewis and the Long Island—to Skye—to Iona—and so forth, lingering among the Hebrides as long as we could. Then we stood over to the coast of Ireland, and visited the Giants' Causeway and Port Rush, where Dr. Richardson, the inventor (discoverer I would say) of the celebrated fiorin grass resides. By the way, he is a chattering charlatan, and his fiorin a mere humbug. But if he were Cicero, and his invention were potatoes, or any thing equally useful, I should detest the recollection of the place and the man, for it was there I learned the death of my friend. Adieu, my dear Morritt; kind compliments to your lady; like poor Tom, 'I cannot daub it farther.' When I hear where you are, and what you are doing, I will write you a more cheerful epistle. Poor Mackenzie, too, is gone—the brother of our friend Lady Hood—and another Mackenzie, son to the Man of Feeling. So short time have I been absent, and such has been the harvest of mortality among those whom I regarded.

"I will attend to your corrections in Waverley. My principal employment for the autumn will be reducing the knowledge I have acquired of the localities of the islands into scenery and stage-room for the 'Lord of the Isles,' of which renowned romance I think I have repeated some portions to you. It was elder born than Rokeby, though it gave place to it in publishing.

"After all, scribbling is an odd propensity. I don't believe there is any ointment, even that of the Edinburgh Review, which can cure the infected. Once more yours entirely,

WALTER SCOTT."

Before I pass from the event which made August 1814 so black a month in Scott's calendar, I may be excused for once more noticing the kind interest which the Duchess of Buccleuch had always taken in the fortunes of the Ettrick Shepherd, and introducing a most characteristic epistle which she received from him a few months before her death. The Duchess—"fearful" (as she said) "of seeing herself in print"—did not answer the Shepherd, but forwarded his letter to Scott, begging him to explain that circumstances did not allow the Duke to concede what he requested, but to assure him that they both retained a strong wish to serve him whenever a suitable opportunity should present itself. Hogg's letter was as follows:—

To her Grace the Duchess of Buccleuch, Dalkeith Palace. Favoured by Messrs. Grieve and Scott, hatters, Edinburgh.[*]

"Ettrickbank, March 17, 1814.

"May it please your Grace,

"I have often grieved you by my applications for this and that. I am sensible of this, for I have had many instances of your wishes to be of service to me, could you have known what to do for that purpose. But there are some eccentric characters in the world, of whom no person can judge or know what will prove beneficial, or what may prove their bane. I have again and again received of your Grace's private bounty, and, though it made me love and respect you the more, I was nevertheless grieved at it. It was never your Grace's money that I wanted, but the honour of your countenance; indeed my heart could never yield to the hope of being patronised by any house save that of Buccleuch, whom I deemed bound to cherish every plant that indicated any thing out of the common way on the Braes of Ettrick and Yarrow.

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[*] Mr. Grieve was a man of cultivated mind and generous disposition, and a most kind and zealous friend of the Shepherd.

"I know you will be thinking that this long prelude is to end with a request. No, Madam! I have taken the resolution of never making another request. I will, however, tell you a story which is, I believe, founded on a fact:—

"There is a small farm at the head of a water called * * * * *, possessed by a mean fellow named * * * *. A third of it has been taken off and laid into another farm—the remainder is as yet unappropriated. Now, there is a certain poor bard, who has two old parents, each of them upwards of eighty-four years of age; and that bard has no house nor home to shelter these poor parents in, or cheer the evening of their lives. A single line, from a certain very great and very beautiful lady, to a certain Mr. Riddell,[*] would ensure that small pendicle to the bard at once. But she will grant no such thing! I appeal to your Grace if she is not a very bad lady that? I am your Grace's ever obliged and grateful,

JAMES HOGG,
THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD."

Though the Duke of Buccleuch would not dismiss a poor tenant merely because Hogg called him "a mean fellow," he had told Scott that if he could find an unappropriated "pendicle," such as this letter referred to, he would most willingly bestow it on the Shepherd. It so happened, that when Scott paid his first visit at Bowhill after the death of the Duchess, the Ettrick Shepherd was mentioned: "My friend," said the Duke, "I must now consider this poor man's case as *her* legacy;" and to this feeling Hogg owed, very soon afterwards, his establishment at Altrive, on his favourite Braes of Yarrow.

As Scott passed through Edinburgh on his return from his voyage, the negotiation as to the Lord of the Isles, which had been protracted through several months, was completed—Constable agreeing to give fifteen hundred guineas for one half of the copyright, while the other moiety was retained by the author. The sum mentioned had been offered by Constable at an early stage of the affair, but it was not until now accepted, in consequence of the earnest wish of Scott and Ballantyne to saddle the publisher of the new poem with part of their old "quire stock,"—which, however, Constable ultimately persisted in refusing. It may easily be believed that John Ballantyne's management of money matters during Scott's six weeks' absence had been such as to render it doubly convenient for the Poet to have this matter settled on his arrival in Edinburgh—and it may also be supposed that the progress of Waverley during that interval had tended to put the chief parties in good humour with each other.

In returning to Waverley, I must observe most distinctly that nothing can be more unfounded than the statement which has of late years been frequently repeated in Memoirs of Scott's Life, that the sale of the first edition of this immortal Tale was slow. It appeared on the 7th of July, and the whole impression (1000 copies) had disappeared within five weeks; an occurrence then unprecedented in the case of an anonymous novel, put forth, at what is called among publishers, *the dead season.* A second edition, of 2000 copies, was at least projected by the 24th of the same month,[†]—that appeared before the end of August, and it too had gone off so rapidly, that when Scott passed through Edinburgh, on his way from the Hebrides, he found Constable eager to treat, on the same terms as before, for a third of 1000 copies.

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[*] Major Riddell, the Duke's Chamberlain at Branksome Castle.

[†] See letter to Mr. Morritt, *ante*, p. 479.

This third edition was published in October, and when a fourth of the like extent was called for in November, I find Scott writing to John Ballantyne:—"I suppose Constable won't quarrel with a work on which he has netted £612 in four months, with a certainty of making it £1000 before the year is out:" and, in fact, owing to the diminished expense of advertising, the profits of this fourth edition were to each party £440. To avoid recurring to these details, I may as well state at once that a fifth edition of 1000 copies appeared in January 1815; a sixth of 1500 in June 1816; a seventh of 2000 in October 1817; an eighth of 2000 in April 1821; that in the collective editions, prior to 1829, 11,000 were disposed of; and that the sale of the current edition, with notes, begun in 1829, has already reached 40,000 copies. Well might Constable regret that he had not ventured to offer £1000 for the whole copyright of Waverley.

I must now look back for a moment to the history of the composition.—The letter of September 1810 was not the only piece of discouragement which Scott had received, during the progress of Waverley, from his first confidant. My good friend, James Ballantyne, in his death-bed *memorandum*, says,—

> "When Mr. Scott first questioned me as to my hopes of him as a novelist, it somehow or other did chance that they were not very high. He saw this, and said—'Well, I don't see why I should not succeed as well as other people. At all events, faint heart never won fair lady—'tis only trying.' When the first volume was completed, I still could not get myself to think much of the Waverley-Honour scenes; and in this I afterwards found that I sympathized with many. But, to my utter shame be it spoken, when I reached the exquisite descriptions of scenes and manners at Tully-Veolan, what did I do but pronounce them at once to be utterly vulgar! When the success of the work so entirely knocked me down as a man of taste, all that the good-natured author said was—'Well, I really thought you were wrong about the Scotch. Why, Burns, by his poetry, had already attracted universal attention to every thing Scottish, and I confess I could n't see why I should not be able to keep the flame alive, merely because I wrote Scotch in prose, and he in rhyme.'"

It is, I think, very agreeable to have this manly avowal to compare with the delicate allusion which Scott makes to the affair in his Preface to the Novel.

The only other friends originally intrusted with his secret appear to have been Mr. Erskine and Mr. Morritt. I know not at what stage the former altered the opinion which he formed on seeing the tiny fragment of 1805. The latter did not, as we have seen, receive the book until it was completed; but he anticipated, before he closed the first volume, the station which public opinion would ultimately assign to Waverley.

> "How the story may continue," Mr. Morritt then wrote, "I am not able to divine; but, as far as I have read, pray let us thank you for the Castle of Tully-Veolan, and the delightful drinking-bout at Lucky Mac-Leary's, for the characters of the Laird of Balmawhapple and the Baron of Bradwardine: and no less for Davie Gellatly, whom I take to be a transcript of William Rose's motley follower, commonly yclept Caliban.[*] If the completion be equal to what we have just de-

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[*] Of David Hinves, Mr. Rose's faithful and affectionate attendant, here alluded to, the reader will find some notices hereafter; for when he appeared at Abbotsford in my time he seemed to be considered by Scott, not in the light of an ordinary servant, but as the friend of his master, and consequently as his own friend too.

voured, it deserves a place among our standard works far better than its modest appearance and anonymous title-page will at first gain it in these days of prolific story-telling. Your manner of narrating is so different from the slipshod sauntering verbiage of common novels, and from the stiff, precise, and prim sententiousness of some of our female moralists, that I think it can't fail to strike any body who knows what style means; but, amongst the gentle class, who swallow every blue-backed book in a circulating library for the sake of the story, I should fear half the knowledge of nature it contains, and all the real humour, may be thrown away. Sir Everard, Mrs. Rachael, and the Baron, are, I think, in the first rank of portraits for nature and character; and I could depone to their likeness in any court of taste. The ballad of St. Swithin, and scraps of *old songs*, were measures of danger, if you meant to continue your concealment, but, in truth, you wear your disguise something after the manner of Bottom, the weaver; and in spite of you the truth will soon peep out."

And next day he resumes,—

> "We have finished Waverley, and were I to tell you all my admiration, you would accuse me of complimenting. You have quite attained the point which your *postscript-preface* mentions as your object—the discrimination of Scottish character, which had hitherto been slurred over with clumsy national daubing."

He adds, a week or two later,—

> "After all, I need not much thank you for your confidence. How could you have hoped that I should not discover you? I had heard you tell half the anecdotes before—some turns you owe to myself; and no doubt most of your friends must have the same sort of thing to say."

Monk Lewis's letter on the subject is so short, that I must give it as it stands:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Abbotsford.

"The Albany, Aug. 17, 1814.

"My dear Scott,

"I return some books of yours which you lent me '*sixty years since*'—and I hope they will reach you safe. I write in great haste; and yet I must mention, that hearing 'Waverley' ascribed to you, I bought it, and read it with all impatience. I am now told it is not yours, but William Erskine's. If this is so, pray tell him from me that I think it excellent in every respect, and that I believe every word of it. Ever yours, M. G. Lewis."

Another friend (and he had, I think, none more dear), the late Margaret Maclean Clephane of Torloisk, afterwards Marchioness of Northampton, writes thus from Kirkness, in Kinross-shire, on the 11th October:—

> "In this place I feel a sort of pleasure, not unallied to pain, from the many recollections that every venerable tree, and every sunny bank, and every honeysuckle bower occasions; and I have found something here that speaks to me in the voice of a valued friend—*Waverley*. The question that rises, it is perhaps improper to give utterance to. If so, let it pass as an exclamation.—Is it possible that Mr. Erskine can have written it? The poetry, I think, would prove a different descent in any court in Christendom. The turn of the phrases in many places is so peculiarly yours, that I fancy I hear your voice repeating them; and there wants but verse to make all Waverley an enchanting poem—varying to be sure from grave to gay, but with so deepening an interest as to leave an impression on the mind that few—very few poems—could awaken. But, why did not the author allow me to be his Gaelic Dragoman? Oh! Mr. ——, whoever you are, you might have safely trusted— M. M. C."

There was one person with whom it would, of course, have been more than vain to affect any concealment. On the publication of the third edition, I find him writing thus to his brother Thomas, who had by this time gone to Canada as paymaster of the 70th regiment:—

> "Dear Tom, a novel here, called Waverley, has had enormous success. I sent you a copy, and will send you another, with the Lord of the Isles, which will be out at Christmas. The success which it has had, with some other circumstances, has induced people
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> 'To lay the bantling at a certain door,
> Where laying store of faults, they'd fain heap more.'
>
> You will guess for yourself how far such a report has credibility; but by no means give the weight of your opinion to the Transatlantic public; for you must know there is also a counter-report, that *you* have written the said Waverley. Send me a novel intermixing your exuberant and natural humour, with any incidents and descriptions of scenery you may see—particularly with characters and traits of manners. I will give it all the cobbling that is necessary, and, if you do but exert yourself, I have not the least doubt it will be worth £500; and, to encourage you, you may, when you send the MS., draw on me for £100, at fifty days' sight—so that your labours will at any rate not be quite thrown away. You have more fun and descriptive talent than most people; and all that you want—*i. e.* the mere practice of composition—I can supply, or the devil's in it. Keep this matter a dead secret, and look knowing when Waverley is spoken of. If you are not Sir John Falstaff, you are as good a man as he, and may therefore face Colville of the Dale. You may believe I don't want to make you the author of a book you have never seen; but if people will, upon their own judgment, suppose so, and also on their own judgment give you £500 to try your hand on a novel, I don't see that you are a pin's-point the worse. Mind that your MS. attends the draft. I am perfectly serious and confident, that in two or three months you might clear the cobs. I beg my compliments to the hero who is afraid of Jeffrey's scalping-knife."

In truth, no one of Scott's intimate friends ever had, or could have had, the slightest doubt as to the parentage of Waverley: nor, although he abstained from communicating the fact formally to most of them, did he ever affect any real concealment in the case of such persons; nor, when any circumstance arose which rendered the withholding of direct confidence on the subject incompatible with perfect freedom of feeling on both sides, did he hesitate to make the avowal.

Nor do I believe that the mystification ever answered much purpose, among literary men of eminence beyond the circle of his personal acquaintance. But it would be difficult to suppose that he had ever wished that to be otherwise; it was sufficient for him to set the mob of readers at gaze, and above all, to escape the annoyance of having productions, actually known to be his, made the daily and hourly topics of discussion in his presence.

Mr. Jeffrey had known Scott from his youth—and, in reviewing Waverley, he was at no pains to conceal his conviction of its authorship. He quarrelled, as usual, with carelessness of style, and some inartificialities of plot, but rendered justice to the substantial merits of the work, in language which I shall not mar by abridgement. The Quarterly was far less favourable in its verdict. Indeed, the articles on Waverley, and afterwards on Guy Mannering, which appeared in that journal, will bear the test of ultimate opinion as badly as any critical pieces which our time has produced. They are written in a captious, cavilling strain of quibble, which shows, as complete blindness to the essential interest of the narrative, as the critic betrays on the subject of the Scottish dialogue, which forms its liveliest ornament, when he pronounces it "a dark dialogue of Anglified Erse." With this remarkable exception, the professional critics were, on the whole, not slow to confess their belief that, under a hackneyed name and trivial form, there had at last appeared a work of original creative genius, worthy of being placed by the side of the very few real master-pieces of prose fiction. Loftier romance was never blended with easier, quainter humour, by Cervantes himself. In his familiar delineations, he had combined the strength of Smollett with the native elegance and unaffected pathos of Goldsmith; in his darker scenes, he had revived that real tragedy which seemed to have left our stage with the age of Shakspeare; and elements of interest so diverse had been blended and interwoven with that nameless grace which, more surely perhaps than even the highest perfection in the command of any one strain of sentiment, marks the master-mind cast in Nature's most felicitous mould.

Scott, with the consciousness avowed long afterwards in his General Preface that he should never in all likelihood have thought of a Scotch novel had he not read Maria Edgeworth's exquisite pieces of Irish character, desired James Ballantyne to send her a copy of Waverley on its first appearance, inscribed "from the author." Miss Edgeworth, whom Scott had never then seen, though some literary correspondence had passed between them, thanked the nameless novelist, under cover to Ballantyne, with the cordial generosity of kindred genius; and the following answer, not from Scott, but from Ballantyne—(who had kept a copy, now before me)—is not to be omitted:—

To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown, Ireland.

"Edinburgh, 11th November, 1814.

"Madam,

"I am desired by the Author of Waverley to acknowledge, in his name, the honour you have done him by your most flattering approbation of his work—a distinction which he receives as one of the highest that could be paid him, and which he would have been proud to have himself stated his sense of, only that, being *impersonal*, he thought it more respectful to require my assistance, than to write an anonymous letter.

"There are very few who have had the opportunities that have been presented to me, of knowing how very elevated is the admiration entertained by the Author of Waverley for the genius of Miss Edgeworth. From the intercourse that took place betwixt us while the work was going through my press, *I know* that the exquisite truth and power of your characters operated on his mind at once to excite and subdue it. He felt that the success of his book was to depend upon the characters much more than upon the story; and he entertained so just and so high an opinion of your eminence in the management of both, as to have strong apprehensions of any comparison which might be instituted betwixt his picture and story and yours; besides, that there is a richness and *naiveté* in Irish character and humour, in which the Scotch are certainly defective, and which could hardly fail, as he thought, to render his delineations cold and tame by the contrast. 'If I could but hit Miss Edgeworth's wonderful power of vivifying all her persons, and making them live as *beings* in your mind, I should not be afraid:'—Often has the Author of Waverley used such language to me; and I knew that I gratified him most when I could say,—'Positively this *is* equal to Miss Edgeworth.' You will thus judge, Madam, how deeply he must feel such praise as you have bestowed upon his efforts. I believe he himself thinks the Baron the best drawn character in his book—I mean the Bailie—honest Bailie Macwheeble. He protests it is the most *true*, though from many causes he did not expect it to be the most popular. It appears to me, that amongst so many splendid portraits, all drawn with such strength and truth, it is most easy to say which is your favourite than which is best. Mr. Henry Mackenzie agrees with you in your objection to the resemblance to Fielding. He says, you should never be forced to recollect, *maugre* all its internal evidence to the contrary, that such a work is a work of fiction, and all its fine creations but of air. The character of Rose is less finished than the author had at one period intended; but I believe the characters of humour grew upon his liking, to the prejudice, in some degree, of those of a more elevated and sentimental kind. Yet what can surpass Flora and her gallant brother?

"I am not authorized to say—but I will not resist my impulse to say to Miss Edgeworth, that another novel, descriptive of more ancient manners still, may be expected from the Author of Waverley. But I request her to observe, that I say this in strict confidence—not certainly meaning to exclude from the knowledge of what will give them pleasure, her respectable family.

"Mr. Scott's poem, the Lord of the Isles, promises fully to equal the most admired of his productions. It is, I think, equally powerful, and certainly more uniformly polished and sustained. I have seen three Cantos. It will consist of six.

"I have the honour to be, Madam, with the utmost admiration and respect,
Your most obedient
and most humble servant,
JAMES BALLANTYNE."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

PROGRESS OF THE LORD OF THE ISLES—CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. JOSEPH TRAIN—RAPID COMPLETION OF THE LORD OF THE ISLES—"SIX WEEKS AT CHRISTMAS"—"REFRESHING THE MACHINE"—PUBLICATION OF THE POEM —AND OF GUY MANNERING—LETTERS TO MORRITT—TERRY—AND JOHN BALLANTYNE—ANECDOTES BY JAMES BALLANTYNE—VISIT TO LONDON—MEETING WITH LORD BYRON—DINNERS AT CARLTON HOUSE.—1814-1815.

By the 11th of November, then, the Lord of the Isles had made great progress, and Scott had also authorized Ballantyne to negotiate among the booksellers for the publication of a second novel. But before I go further into these transactions, I must introduce the circumstances of Scott's first connexion with an able and amiable man, whose services were of high importance to him, at this time and ever after, in the prosecution of his literary labours. Calling at Ballantyne's printing-office while Waverley was in the press, he happened to take up a proof-sheet of a volume, entitled "POEMS, *with notes illustrative of traditions in Galloway and Ayrshire*, by Joseph Train, Supervisor of Excise at Newton Stewart." The sheet contained a Ballad on an Ayrshire tradition, about a certain "Witch of Carrick," whose skill in the black art was, it seems, instrumental in the destruction of one of the scattered vessels of the Spanish Armada. The ballad begins:—

"Why gallops the palfrey with Lady Dunore?
Who drives away Turnberry's kine from the shore?
Go tell it to Carrick, and tell it in Kyle—
Although the proud Dons are now passing the Moil,*
On this magic clew,
That in fairyland grew,
Old Elcine de Aggart has taken in hand
To wind up their lives ere they win to our strand."

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* The mull of Cantyre.

Scott immediately wrote to the author, begging to be included in his list of subscribers for a dozen copies, and suggesting at the same time a verbal alteration in one of the stanzas of this ballad. Mr. Train acknowledged his letter with gratitude, and the little book reached him just as he was about to embark in the Lighthouse yacht. He took it with him on his voyage, and on returning home again, wrote to Mr. Train, expressing the gratification he had received from several of his metrical pieces, but still more from his notes, and requesting him, as he seemed to be enthusiastic about traditions and legends, to communicate any matters of that order connected with Galloway which he might not himself think of turning to account; "for," said Scott, "nothing interests me so much as local anecdotes; and, as the applications for charity usually conclude, the smallest donation will be thankfully accepted."

Mr. Train, in a little narrative with which he has favoured me, says, that for some years before this time he had been engaged, in alliance with a friend of his, Mr. Denniston, in collecting materials for a History of Galloway; they had circulated lists of queries among the clergy and parish schoolmasters, and had thus, and by their own personal researches, accumulated "a great variety of the most excellent materials for that purpose;" but that, from the hour of his correspondence with Walter Scott, he "renounced every idea of authorship for himself," resolving, "that henceforth his chief pursuit should be collecting whatever he thought would be most interesting to *him*;" and that Mr. Denniston was easily persuaded to acquiesce in the abandonment of their original design. "Upon receiving Mr. Scott's letter" (says Mr. Train), "I became still more zealous in the pursuit of ancient lore, and being the first person who had attempted to collect old stories in that quarter with any view to publication, I became so noted, that even beggars, in the hope of reward, came frequently from afar to Newton-Stewart, to recite old ballads and relate old stories to me." Erelong, Mr. Train visited Scott both at Edinburgh and at Abbotsford; a true affection continued ever afterwards to be maintained between them; and this generous ally was, as the prefaces to the Waverley Novels signify, one of the earliest confidants of that series of works, and certainly the most efficient of all the author's friends in furnishing him with materials for their composition. Nor did he confine himself to literary services; whatever portable object of antiquarian curiosity met his eye, this good man secured and treasured up with the same destination; and if ever a catalogue of the museum at Abbotsford shall appear, no single contributor, most assuredly, will fill so large a space in it as Mr. Train.

His first considerable communication, after he had formed the unselfish determination above-mentioned, consisted of a collection of anecdotes concerning the Galloway gypsies, and "a local story of an astrologer, who calling at a farm-house at the moment when the goodwife was in travail, had, it was said, predicted the future fortune of the child, almost in the words placed in the mouth of John M'Kinlay, in the introduction to Guy Mannering." Scott told him, in reply, that the story of the astrologer reminded him of "one he had heard in his youth;" that is to say, as the Introduction explains, from this M'Kinlay; but Mr. Train has, since his friend's death, recovered a rude *Durham* ballad,* which, in fact, contains a great deal more of the

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* The following is the *Garland* here referred to. The ballad was taken down from the recitation of Mrs. Young of Castle-Douglas, who, as her family informed Mr. Train, had long been in the habit of repeating it over to them once in the year, in order that it might not escape from her memory. No copy of the printed broadside has as yet been recovered.

THE DURHAM GARLAND.

IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.

1.

A WORTHY Lord of birth and state,
Who did in Durham live of late—
But I will not declare his name,
By reason of his birth and fame.

2.

This Lord he did a hunting go;
If you the truth of all would know,
He had indeed a noble train,
Of Lords and Knights and Gentlemen.

3.

This noble Lord he left the train
Of Lords and Knights and Gentlemen;
And hearing not the horn to blow,
He could not tell which way to go.

4.

But he did wander to and fro,
Being weary, likewise full of woe:
At last Dame Fortune was so kind
That he the Keeper's house did find.

5.

He went and knocked at the door,
He thought it was so late an hour.
The Forester did let him in,
And kindly entertained him.

6.

About the middle of the night,
When as the stars did shine most bright,
This Lord was in a sad surprise,
Being wakened by a fearful noise.

7.

Then he did rise and call with speed,
To know the reason then indeed,
Of all that shrieking and those cries
Which did disturb his weary eyes.

8.

"I'm sorry, Sir," the Keeper said—
"That you should be so much afraid;
But I do hope all will be well,
For my Wife she is in travail."

9.

The noble Lord was learned and wise,
To know the Planets in the skies.
He saw one evil Planet reign,
He called the Forester again.

10.

He gave him then to understand,
He'd have the Midwife hold her hand;
But he was answered by the maid,
"My Mistress is delivered."

11.

At one o'clock that very morn,
A lovely infant there was born.
It was indeed a charming boy,
Which brought the man and wife much joy.

12.

The Lord was generous, kind, and free,
And proffered Godfather to be;
The Goodman thanked him heartily
For his goodwill and courtesy.

13.

A Parson was sent for with speed,
For to baptize the child indeed;
And after that as I heard say,
In mirth and joy they spent the day.

14.

This Lord did noble presents give,
Which all the servants did receive,
They prayed God to enrich his store,
For they never had so much before.

15.

And likewise to the child he gave
A present noble, rich, and brave;
It was a charming cabinet,
That was with pearls and jewels set.

16.

And within it was a chain of gold,
Would dazzle eyes for to behold;
A richer gift, as I may say,
Was not beheld this many a day.

17.

He charged his father faithfully,
That he himself would keep the key,
Until the child could write and read—
And then to give him it indeed;—

18.

"Pray do not open it at all,
Whatever should on you befall;
For it may do my godson good,
If it be rightly understood."

19.

This Lord did not declare his name,
Nor yet the place from whence he came,
But secretly he did depart,
And left them grieved to the heart.

main fable of Guy Mannering than either his own written, or M'Kinlay's oral edition of the *Gallovidian* anecdote had conveyed; and—

PART II.

1.

The second part I now unfold,
As true a story as e'er was told,
Concerning of a lovely child,
Who was obedient, sweet, and mild.

2.

This child did take his learning so,
If you the truth of all would know,
At eleven years of age indeed,
Both Greek and Latin he could read.

3.

Then thinking of his cabinet,
That was with pearls and jewels set,
He asked his father for the key,
Which he gave him right speedily;

4.

And when he did the same unlock,
He was with great amazement struck
When he the riches did behold,
And likewise saw the chain of Gold.

5.

But searching farther he did find
A paper which disturbed his mind,
That was within the cabinet,
In Greek and Latin it was writ.

6.

My child, serve God that is on high,
And pray to him incessantly;
Obey your parents, love your king,
That nothing may your conscience sting.

7.

At seven years hence your fate will be,
You must be hanged upon a tree;
Then pray to God both night and day,
To let that hour pass away.

8.

When he these woeful lines did read,
He with a sigh did say indeed,
"If hanging be my destiny,
My parents shall not see me die;

9.

"For I will wander to and fro,
I'll go where I no one do know;
But first I'll ask my parents' leave,
In hopes their blessing to receive."

10.

Then locking up his cabinet,
He went from his own chamber straight
Unto his only parents dear,
Beseeching them with many a tear

11.

That they would grant what he would have—
"But first your blessing I do crave,
And beg you'll let me go away,
'Twill do me good another day."

12.

* * * * * *
* * * * * *

"And if I live I will return,
When seven years past and gone."

13

Both man and wife did then reply,
"I fear my son that we shall die,
If we should yield to let you go,
Our aged hearts would break with woe."

14.

But he entreated eagerly,
While they were forced to comply,
And give consent to let him go,
But where, alas! they did not know.

15.

In the third part you soon shall find,
That fortune was to him most kind,
And after many dangers past,
He came to Durham at the last.

PART III.

1.

He went by chance, as I heard say,
To that same house that very day,
In which his godfather did dwell;
But mind what luck to him befel:—

This child did crave a service there,
On which came out his Godfather,
And seeing him a pretty youth,
He took him for his Page in truth.

3.

Then in this place he pleased so well,
That 'bove the rest he bore the bell;
This child so well the Lord did please,
He raised him higher by degrees.

4.

He made him Butler sure indeed,
And then his steward with all speed,
Which made the other servants spite,
And envy him both day and night.

5.

He was never false unto his trust,
But proved ever true and just;
And to the Lord did hourly pray,
To guide him still both night and day.

possessing, as I do, numberless evidences of the haste with which Scott drew up his beautiful Prefaces and introductions of 1829, 1830,

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6.

In this place, plainly it appears,
He lived the space of seven years;
His parents then he thought upon,
And of his promise to return.

7.

Then humbly of his Lord did crave,
That he his free consent might have
To go and see his parents dear,
He had not seen this many a year.

8.

Then having leave away he went,
Not dreaming of the false intent
That was contrived against him then
By wicked, false, deceitful men.

9.

They had in his portmanteau put
This noble Lord's fine golden cup;
That when the Lord at dinner was,
The cup was missed as come to pass.

10.

"Where can it be?" this Lord did say,
"We had it here but yesterday."—
The Butler then replied with speed,
"If you will hear the truth indeed,"

11.

"Your darling Steward which is gone,
With feathered nest away is flown;
I'll warrant you he has that, and more
That doth belong unto your store."

12.

"No," says this Lord, "that cannot be,
For I have tried his honesty;"
"Then," said the Cook, "my Lord, I die
Upon a tree full ten feet high."

13.

Then hearing what these men did say,
He sent a messenger that day,
To take him with a hue and cry,
And bring him back immediately.

14.

They searched his portmanteau with speed,
In which they found the cup indeed;
Then was he struck with sad surprise,
He could not well believe his eyes.

15.

The assizes then were drawing nigh,
And he was tried and doomed to die;
And his injured innocence
Could nothing say in his defence.

16.

But going to the gallows tree,
On which he thought to hanged be,
He clapped his hands upon his breast,
And thus in tears these words exprest:—

17.

"Blind Fortune will be Fortune still
I see, let man do what he will;
For though this day I needs must die,
I am not guilty—no, not I."

18.

This noble Lord was in amaze,
He stood and did with wonder gaze;
Then he spoke out with words so mild,—
"What mean you by that saying, Child?"

19.

"Will that your Lordship," then said he,
"Grant one day's full reprieve for me,
A dismal story I'll relate,
Concerning of my wretched fate."

20.

"Speak up my child," this Lord did say,
I say you shall not die this day—
And if I find you innocent,
I'll crown your days with sweet content.

21.

He told him all his dangers past,
He had gone through from first to last,
He fetched the chain and cabinet,
Likewise the paper that was writ.

22.

When that this noble Lord did see,
He ran to him most eagerly,
And in his arms did him embrace,
Repeating of those words in haste.—

23.

"My Child, my Child, how blessed am I,
Thou art innocent, and shall not die;
For I'm indeed thy Godfather,
And thou was't born in fair Yorkshire.

24.

"I have indeed one daughter dear,
Which is indeed my only heir;
And I will give her unto thee,
And crown you with felicity."

25

So then the Butler and the Cook
('Twas them that stole the golden cup)
Confessed their faults immediately,
And for it died deservedly.

26.

This goodly youth, as I do hear,
Thus raised, sent for his parents dear,
Who did rejoice their Child to see—
And so I end my tragedy.

and 1831,—I am strongly inclined to think that he must in his boyhood have read the Durham Broadside or Chapbook itself—as well as heard the old serving-man's Scottish version of it.

However this may have been, Scott's answer to Mr. Train proceeded in these words:—

"I am now to solicit a favour, which I think your interest in Scottish antiquities will induce you readily to comply with. I am very desirous to have some account of the present state of *Turnberry Castle*—whether any vestiges of it remain—what is the appearance of the ground—the names of the neighbouring places—and above all, what are the traditions of the place (if any) concerning its memorable surprise by Bruce, upon his return from the coast of Ireland, in the commencement of the brilliant part of his career. The purpose of this is to furnish some hints for notes to a work in which I am now engaged, and I need not say I will have great pleasure in mentioning the source from which I derive my information. I have only to add, with the modest importunity of a lazy correspondent, that the sooner you oblige me with an answer (if you can assist me on the subject), the greater will the obligation be on me, who am already your obliged humble servant,

W. Scott."

The recurrence of the word *Turnberry* in the ballad of Elcine de Aggart, had of course suggested this application, which was dated on the 7th of November.

"I had often," says Mr. Train, "when a boy, climbed the brown hills, and traversed the shores of Carrick, but I could not sufficiently remember the exact places and distances as to which Mr. Scott enquired; so, immediately on receipt of his letter, I made a journey into Ayrshire to collect all the information I possibly could, and forwarded it to him on the 18th of the same month."

Among the particulars thus communicated, was the local superstition that on the anniversary of the night when Bruce landed at Turnberry from Arran, the same meteoric gleam which had attended his voyage reappeared, unfailingly, in the same quarter of the heavens. With this circumstance Scott was much struck. "Your information," he writes on the 22d November, "was particularly interesting and acceptable, especially that which relates to the supposed preternatural appearance of the fire, &c., which I hope to make some use of." What use he did make of it, if any reader has forgotten, will be seen by reference to stanzas 7—17 of the 5th Canto of the Poem; and the notes to the same Canto embody, with due acknowledgment, the more authentic results of Mr. Train's pilgrimage to Carrick.

I shall recur presently to this communication from Mr. Train: but must pause for a moment to introduce two letters, both written in the same week with Scott's request as to the localities of Turnberry. They both give us amusing sketches of his buoyant spirits at this period of gigantic exertion; and the first of them, which relates chiefly to Maturin's Tragedy of Bertram, shows how he could still continue to steal time for attention to the affairs of brother authors less energetic than himself.

To Daniel Terry, Esq.

"Abbotsford, November 10, 1814.

"My dear Terry,

"I should have long since answered your kind letter by our friend Young, but he would tell you of my departure with our trusty and well-beloved Erskine, on a sort of voyage to Nova Zembla. Since my return, I have fallen under the tyrannical dominion of a certain Lord of the Isles. Those Lords were famous for oppression in the days of yore, and if I can judge by the posthumous despotism exercised over me, they have not improved by their demise. The *peine forte et dure* is, you know, nothing in comparison to being obliged to grind verses; and so devilish repulsive is my disposition, that I can never put my wheel into constant and regular motion, till Ballantyne's devil claps in his proofs, like the hot cinder which you Bath folks used to clap in beside an unexperienced turnspit, as a hint to be expeditious in his duty. O long life to the old hermit of Prague, who never saw pen and ink—much happier in that negative circumstance than in his alliance with the niece of King Gorboduc.

"To talk upon a blither subject, I wish you saw Abbotsford, which begins this season to look the whimsical, gay, odd cabin that we had chalked out. I have been obliged to relinquish Stark's plan which was greatly too expensive. So I have made the old farm-house my *corps de logis*, with some outlying places for kitchen, laundry, and two spare bed-rooms, which run along the east wall of the farm-court, not without some picturesque effect. A perforated cross, the spoils of the old kirk of Galashiels, decorates an advanced door, and looks very well. This little sly bit of sacrilege has given our spare rooms the name of *the chapel.* I earnestly invite you to a *pew* there, which you will find as commodious for the purpose of a nap as you have ever experienced when, under the guidance of old Mrs. Smollett, you were led to St. George's, Edinburgh.

"I have been recommending to John Kemble (I dare say without any chance of success) to peruse a MS. Tragedy of Maturin's, author of Montorio: it is one of those things which will either succeed greatly or be damned gloriously, for its merits are marked, deep, and striking, and its faults of a nature obnoxious to ridicule. He had our old friend Satan (none of your sneaking St. John Street devils, but the archfiend himself) brought on the stage bodily. I believe I have exorcised the foul fiend—for, though in reading he was a most terrible fellow, I feared for his reception in public. The last act is ill-contrived. He piddles (so to speak) through a cullender, and divides the whole horrors of the catastrophe (though God wot there are enough of them) into a kind of drippity-droppity of four or five scenes, instead of inundating the audience with them at once in the finale, with a grand '*gardez l'eau.*' With all this, which I should say had I written the thing myself, it is grand and powerful; the language most animated and poetical; and the characters sketched with a masterly enthusiasm. Many thanks for Captain Richard Falconer.[*] To your kindness I owe the two books in the world I most longed to see, not so much for their intrinsic merits, as because they bring back with vivid associations the sentiments of my childhood—I might almost say infancy. Nothing ever disturbed my feelings more than when, sitting by the old oak table, my aunt, Lady Raeburn, used to read the lamentable catastrophe of the ship's departing without Captain Falconer, in consequence of the whole party making free with lime punch on the eve of its being launched. This and Captain Bingfield,[†] I much wished to read once more, and I owe the possession of both to your kindness. Every body that I see talks highly of your steady interest with the public, wherewith, as I never doubted of it, I am pleased but not surprised. We are just now leaving this for the winter: the children went yesterday. Tom Purdie, Finella, and the greyhounds, all in excellent health; the latter have not been hunted this season!!! Can add nothing more to excite your admiration. Mrs. Scott sends her kind compliments.

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[*] "The Voyages, Dangerous Adventures, and Imminent Escapes of Capt. Rich. Falconer. Containing the Laws, Customs, and Manners of the *Indians* in *America*; his shipwrecks; his marrying an *Indian* wife; his narrow escape from the Island of *Dominico*, &c. Intermixed with the Voyages and Adventures of Thomas Randal, of Cork, Pilot; with his Shipwreck in the *Baltick*, being the only man that escap'd. His being taken by the Indians of Virginia, &c. And an Account of his Death. *The Fourth Edition.* London. Printed for J. Marshall, at the Bible in Gracechurch Street. 1734."

On the fly-leaf is the following note in Scott's handwriting:—"This book I read in early youth. I am ignorant whether it is altogether fictitious and written upon De Foe's plan, which it greatly resembles, or whether it is only an exaggerated account of the adventures of a real person. It is very scarce, for, endeavouring to add it to the other favourites of my infancy, I think I looked for it ten years to no purpose, and at last owed it to the active kindness of Mr. Terry. Yet Richard Falconer's adventures seem to have passed through several editions."

[†] "The Travels and Adventures of William Bingfield, Esq., containing, as surprizing a Fluctuation of Circumstances, both by Sea and Land, as ever befel one man. With An Accurate Account of the Shape, Nature, and Properties of that most furious, and amazing Animal, the Dog-Bird. Printed from his own Manuscript. With a beautiful Frontispiece. 2 Vols. 12mo. London:—Printed for E. Withers, at the Seven Stars, in Fleet Street.

W. Scott."

The following, dated a day after, refers to some lines which Mr. Morritt had sent him from Worthing.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M. P., Worthing.

"Abbotsford, Nov. 11, 1814.

"My dear Morritt,

"I had your kind letter with the beautiful verses. May the muse meet you often on the verge of the sea or among your own woods of Rokeby! May you have spirits to profit by her visits (and that implies all good wishes for the continuance of Mrs. M.'s convalescence), and may I often, by the fruits of your inspiration, have my share of pleasure! My muse is a Tyranness, and not a Christian queen, and compels me to attend to longs and shorts, and I know not what, when, God wot, I had rather be planting evergreens by my new old fountain. You must know that, like the complaint of a fine young boy who was complimented by a stranger on his being a smart fellow, 'I am sair halded down by *the bubbly jock.*' In other words, the turkey cock, at the head of a family of some forty or fifty infidels, lays waste all my shrubs. In vain I remonstrate with Charlotte upon these occasions; she is in league with the hen-wife, the natural protectress of these pirates; and I have only the inhuman consolation that I may one day, like a cannibal, eat up my enemies. This is but dull fun, but what else have I to tell you about? It would be worse if, like Justice Shallow's Davy, I should consult you upon sowing down the headland with wheat. My literary tormentor is a certain Lord of the Isles, famed for his tyranny of yore, and not unjustly. I am bothering some tale of him I have had long by me into a sort of romance. I think you will like it: it is Scottified up to the teeth, and somehow I feel myself like the liberated chiefs of the Rolliad, 'who boast their native philabeg restored.' I believe the frolics one can cut in this loose garb are all set down by you Sassenachs to the real agility of the wearer, and not the brave, free, and independent character of his clothing. It is, in a word, the real Highland fling, and no one is supposed able to dance it but a native. I always thought that epithet of Gallia *Braccata* implied subjugation, and was never surprised at Cæsar's easy conquests, considering that his Labienus and all his merry men wore, as we say, bottomless breeks. Ever yours,

W. S."

Well might he describe himself as being hard at work with his Lord of the Isles. The date of Ballantyne's letter to Miss Edgeworth (November 11), in which he mentions the third Canto as completed; that of the communication from Mr. Train (November 18), on which so much of Canto fifth was grounded; and that of a note from Scott to Ballantyne (December 16, 1814), announcing that he had sent the last stanza of the poem: these dates, taken together, afford conclusive evidence of the fiery rapidity with which the three last Cantos of the Lord of the Isles were composed.

1753." On the fly-leaf of the first volume Scott has written as follows:—"I read this scarce little *Voyage Imaginaire* when I was about ten years old, and long after sought for a copy without being able to find a person who would so much as acknowledge having heard of William Bingfield or his Dog-Birds, until the indefatigable kindness of my friend Mr. Terry of the Hay Market, made me master of this copy. I am therefore induced to think the book is of very rare occurrence."

He writes, on the 25th December, to Constable that he "had corrected the last proofs, and was setting out for Abbotsford to refresh the machine." And in what did his refreshment of the machine consist? Besides having written within this year the greater part, almost I believe the whole of the Life of Swift—Waverley—and the Lord of the Isles—he had given two essays to the Encyclopædia Supplement, and published, with an Introduction and notes, one of the most curious pieces of family history ever produced to the world, on which he laboured with more than usual zeal and diligence, from his warm affection for the noble representative of its author. This inimitable "*Memorie of the Somervilles*" came out in October; and it was speedily followed by an annotated reprint of the strange old treatise, entitled "Rowland's letting off the humours of the blood in the head vein, 1611." He had also kept up his private correspondence on a scale which I believe never to have been exemplified in the case of any other person who wrote continually for the press—except, perhaps, Voltaire; and, to say nothing of strictly professional duties, he had, as a vast heap of documents now before me proves, superintended from day to day, except during his Hebridean voyage, the still perplexed concerns of the Ballantynes, with a watchful assiduity that might have done credit to the most diligent of tradesmen. The "machine" might truly require "refreshment."

It was, as has been seen, on the 7th of November that Scott acknowledged the receipt of that communication from Mr. Train which included the story of the Galloway astrologer. There can be no doubt that this story recalled to his mind, if not the Durham ballad, the similar but more detailed corruption of it which he had heard told by his father's servant, John M'Kinlay, in the days of George's Square and Green Breeks, and which he has preserved in the introduction to Guy Mannering, as the groundwork of that tale. It has been shown that the three last Cantos of the Lord of the Isles were written between the 11th of November and the 25th of December; and it is therefore scarcely to be supposed that any part of this novel had been penned before he thus talked of "refreshing the machine." It is quite certain that when James Ballantyne wrote to Miss Edgeworth on the 11th November, he could not have seen one page of Guy Mannering, since he in that letter announces that the new novel of his nameless friend would depict manners *more ancient* than those of 1745. And yet it is equally certain that before the Lord of the Isles was *published*, which took place on the 18th of January, 1815, two volumes of Guy Mannering had been not only written and copied by an amanuensis, but printed.

Scott thus writes to Morritt, in sending him his copy of the Lord of the Isles.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M. P. Worthing.

"Edinburgh, 19th January, 1815.

"My dear Morritt,

"I have been very foolishly putting off my writing until I should have time for a good long epistle; and it is astonishing what a number of trifles have interfered to prevent my commencing on a great scale. The last of these has been rather of an extraordinary kind, for your little friend Walter has chose to make himself the town-talk, by taking what seemed to be the small-pox, despite of vaccination in infancy, and inoculation with the variolous matter thereafter, which last I resorted to by way of making assurance double sure. The medical gentleman who attended him is of opinion that he *has* had the real small-pox, but it shall never be averred by me—for the catastrophe of Tom Thumb is enough to deter any thinking person from entering into a feud with the cows. Walter is quite well again, which was the principal matter I was interested in. We had very nearly been in a bad scrape, for I had fixed the Monday on which he sickened, to take him with me for the Christmas vacation to Abbotsford. It is probable that he would not have pleaded headach when there was such a party in view, especially as we were to shoot wild-ducks one day together at Cauldshiels Loch; and what the consequence of such a journey might have been, God alone knows.

"I am clear of the Lord of the Isles, and I trust you have your copy. It closes my poetic labours upon an extended scale: but I daresay I shall always be dabbling in rhyme until the *solve senescentem*. I have directed the copy to be sent to Portland Place. I want to shake myself free from Waverley, and accordingly have made a considerable exertion to finish an odd little tale within such time as will mystify the public, I trust—unless they suppose me to be Briareus. Two volumes are already printed, and the only persons in my confidence, W. Erskine, and Ballantyne, are of opinion that it is much more interesting than Waverley. It is a tale of private life, and only varied by the perilous exploits of smugglers and excisemen. The success of Waverley has given me a spare hundred or two, which I have resolved to spend in London this spring, bringing up Charlotte and Sophia with me. I do not forget my English friends—but I fear they will forget me, unless I show face now and then. My correspondence gradually drops, as must happen when people do not meet; and I long to see Ellis, Heber, Gifford, and one or two more. I do not include Mrs. Morritt and you, because we are much nearer neighbours, and within a whoop and a holla in comparison. I think we should come up by sea, if I were not a little afraid of Charlotte being startled by the March winds—for our vacation begins 12th March.

"You will have heard of poor Caberfae's death? What a pity it is he should have outlived his promising young representative. His state was truly pitiable—all his fine faculties lost in paralytic imbecility, and yet not so entirely so, but that he perceived his deprivation as in a glass darkly. Sometimes he was fretful and anxious, because he did not see his son; sometimes he expostulated and complained that his boy had been allowed to die without his seeing him; and sometimes, in a less clouded state of intellect, he was sensible of, and lamented his loss in its full extent. These, indeed, are the 'fears of the brave and follies of the wise,' which sadden and humiliate the lingering hours of prolonged existence. Our friend Lady Hood will now be Caberfae herself. She has the spirit of a chieftainess in every drop of her blood, but there are few situations in which the cleverest women are so apt to be imposed upon as in the management of landed property, more especially of an Highland estate. I do fear the accomplishment of the prophecy, that when there should be a deaf Caberfae, the house was to fall.*

"I am delighted to find Mrs. Morritt is recovering health and strength—better walking on the beach at Worthing than on the *plainstanes* of Prince's Street, for the weather is very severe here indeed. I trust Mrs. M. will, in her milder climate, lay in such a stock of health and strength as may enable you to face the north in Autumn. I have got the nicest crib for you possible, just about twelve feet square, and in the harmonious vicinity of a piggery. You never saw so minute an establishment,—but it has all that we wish for, and all our friends will care about; and we long to see you there. Charlotte sends the kindest remembrances to Mrs. Morritt.

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* Francis Lord Seaforth died 11th January, 1815, in his 60th year, having outlived four sons, all of high promise. His title died with him, and he was succeeded in his estates by his daughter, Lady Hood, now the Hon. Mrs. Stewart Mackenzie of Seaforth. See some verses on Lord Seaforth's death, in Scott's Poetical Works, vol. viii. p. 392, Edit. 1834. The Celtic designation of the chief of the clan MacKenzie, *Caberfae*, means *Stag-head*, the bearing of the family. The prophecy which Scott also alludes to in this letter, is also mentioned by Sir Humphrey Davy in one of his Journals; (see his Life, by Dr. Davy, vol. ii., p. 72)—and it was, if the account be correct, a most extraordinary one, for it connected the fall of the house of Seaforth not only with the appearance of a deaf *Caberfae*, but with the contemporaneous appearance of various different physical misfortunes in several of the other great Highland chiefs; all of which are said—and were certainly believed both by Scott and Davy—to have actually occurred within the memory of the generation that has not yet passed away. Mr. Morritt can testify thus far—that he "heard the prophecy quoted in the Highlands at a time when Lord Seaforth had two sons both alive and in good health—so that it certainly was not made *après coup*.'

"As for politics, I have thought little about them lately; the high and exciting interest is so completely subsided, that the wine is upon the lees. As for America, we have so managed as to give her the appearance of triumph, and what is worse, encouragement to resume the war upon a more favourable opportunity. It was our business to have given them a fearful memento that the babe unborn should have remembered; but, having missed this opportunity, I believe that this country would submit with great reluctance to continue a war, for which there is really no specific object. As for the continental monarchs, there is no guessing what the folly of Kings and Ministers may do; but, God knows! would any of them look at home, enough is to be done which might strengthen and improve their dominions in a different manner than by mere extension. I trust Ministers will go out rather than be engaged in war again, upon any account. If France is wise (I have no fear that any superfluous feeling of humanity will stand in the way), she will send 10,000 of her most refractory troops to fight with Christophe and the yellow fever in the Island of St. Domingo, and then I presume they may sit down in quiet at home.

"But my sheet grows to an end, and so does the pleading of the learned counsel, who is thumping the poor bar as I write. He hems twice. Forward, sweet Orator Higgins!—at least till I sign myself, dear Morritt, yours most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

Guy Mannering was published on the 24th of February—that is, exactly two months after the Lord of the Isles was dismissed from the author's desk; and—making but a narrow allowance for the operations of the transcriber, printer, bookseller, &c., I think the dates I have gathered together, confirm the accuracy of what I have often heard Scott say, that his second novel "was the work of six weeks at a Christmas." Such was the recipe "for refreshing the machine."

I am sorry to have to add, that this severity of labour, like the repetition of it which had such deplorable effects at a later period of his life, was the result of an anxiety to acquit himself of obligations arising out of his connexion with the commercial speculations of the Ballantynes. The approach of Christmas, 1814, brought with it the prospect of such a recurrence of difficulties about the discount of John's bills, as to render it absolutely necessary that Scott should either apply again for assistance to his private friends, or task his literary powers with some such extravagant effort as has now been recorded. The great object, which was still to get rid of the heavy stock that had been accumulated before the storm of May, 1813, at length determined the chief partner to break up, as soon as possible, the concern which his own sanguine rashness, and the gross irregularities of his mercurial lieutenant, had so lamentably perplexed; but Constable, having already enabled the firm to avoid public exposure more than once, was not now, any more than when he made his contract for the Lord of the Isles, disposed to burden himself with an additional load of Weber's "Beaumont and Fletcher," and other almost as unsaleable books. While they were still in hopes of overcoming his scruples, it happened that a worthy friend of Scott's, the late Mr. Charles Erskine, his sheriff-substitute in Selkirkshire, had immediate occasion for a sum of money which he had some time before advanced, at Scott's personal request, to the firm of John Ballantyne and Company; and, on receiving his application, Scott wrote as follows:—

To Mr. John Ballantyne, Bookseller, Edinburgh.

"Abbotsford, October 14, 1814.

"Dear John,

"Charles Erskine wishes his money, as he has made a purchase of land. This is a new perplexity—for paid he must be forthwith—as his advance was friendly and confidential. I do not at this moment see how it is to be raised, but believe I shall find means. In the mean while, it will be necessary to propitiate the Leviathans of Paternoster-row. My idea is, that you or James should write to them to the following effect:—That a novel is offered you by the Author of Waverley; that the author is desirous it should be out before Mr. Scott's poem, or as soon thereafter as possible; and that having resolved, as they are aware, to relinquish publishing, you only wish to avail yourselves of this offer to the extent of helping off some of your stock. I leave it to you to consider whether you should condescend on any particular work to offer them as bread to their butter—or on any particular amount—as £500. One thing must be provided, that Constable shares to the extent of the Scottish sale—they, however, managing. My reason for letting them have this scent of roast meat is, in case it should be necessary for us to apply to them to renew bills in December. Yours, W. S."

Upon receiving this letter, John Ballantyne suggested to Scott that he should be allowed to offer, not only the new novel, but the next edition of Waverley, to Longman, Murray, or Blackwood—in the hope that the prospect of being let in to the profits of the already established favourite, would overcome effectually the hesitation of one or other of these houses about venturing on the encumbrance which Constable seemed to shrink from with such pertinacity; but upon this ingenious proposition Scott at once set his *veto*.

"Dear John," he writes, (Oct. 17, 1814), "your expedients are all wretched, as far as regards me. I never will give Constable, or any one, room to say I have broken my word with him in the slightest degree. If I lose every thing else, I will at least keep my honour unblemished; and I do hold myself bound in honour to offer him a Waverley, while he shall continue to comply with the conditions annexed. I intend the new novel to operate as something more permanent than a mere accommodation; and if I can but be permitted to do so, I will print it before it is sold to any one, and then propose, first, to Constable and Longman, second, to Murray and Blackwood, to take the whole at such a rate as will give them one-half of the fair profits; granting acceptances which, upon an edition of 3000, which we shall be quite authorized to print, will amount to an immediate command of £1500; and to this we may couple the condition, that they must take £500 or £600 of the old stock. I own I am not solicitous to deal with Constable alone, nor am I at all bound to offer him the new novel on any terms; but he, knowing of the intention, may expect to be treated with at least, although it is possible we may not deal. However, if Murray and Blackwood were to come forward with any handsome proposal as to the stock, I should certainly have no objection to James's giving the pledge of the Author of W. for his next work. You are like the crane in the fable, when you boast of not having got any thing from the business; you may thank God that it did not bite your head off. Would to God I were at let-a-be for let-a-be;—but you have done your best, and so must I. Yours truly, W. S."

Both Mr. Murray, and Longman's partner, Mr. Rees, were in Scotland about this time; and the former at least paid Scott a visit at Abbotsford. Of course, however, whatever propositions they may have made, were received by one or other of the Ballantynes. The result was, that the house of Longman undertook Guy Mannering on the terms dictated by Scott—namely, granting bills for £1500, and relieving John Ballantyne and Company of stock to the extent of £500 more; and Constable's first information of the transaction was from Messrs. Longman themselves, when they, in compliance with Scott's wish as signified in the letter last quoted, offered him a share in the edition which they had purchased. With one or two exceptions, originating in circumstances nearly similar, the house of Constable published all the subsequent series of the Waverley Novels.

I must not, however, forget that *The Lord of the Isles* was published a month before *Guy Mannering*. The poem was received with an interest much heightened by the recent and growing success of the mysterious Waverley. Its appearance, so rapidly following that novel, and accompanied with the announcement of another prose tale, just about to be published, by the same hand, puzzled and confounded the mob of dulness.* The more sagacious few said to themselves—Scott is making one serious effort more in his old line, and by this it will be determined whether he does or does not altogether renounce that for his new one.

The Edinburgh Review on the Lord of the Isles begins with—

> "Here is another genuine Lay of the Great Minstrel, with all his characteristic faults, beauties, and irregularities. The same glow of colouring—the same energy of narration—the same amplitude of description are conspicuous—with the same still more characteristic disdain of puny graces and small originalities—the true poetical hardihood, in the strength of which he urges on his Pegasus fearlessly through dense and rare, and aiming gallantly at the great ends of truth and effect, stoops but rarely to study the means by which they are to be attained; avails himself without scruple of common sentiments and common images wherever they seem fitted for his purpose; and is original by the very boldness of his borrowing, and impressive by his disregard of epigram and emphasis."

The conclusion of the contemporaneous article in the Quarterly Review, is as follows:

> "The many beautiful passages which we have extracted from the poem, combined with the brief remarks subjoined to each canto, will sufficiently show, that although the Lord of the Isles is not likely to add very much to the reputation of Mr. Scott, yet this must be imputed rather to the greatness of his previous reputation, than to the absolute inferiority of the poem itself. Unfortunately, its merits are merely incidental, while its defects are mixed up with the very elements of the poem. But it is not in the power of Mr. Scott to write with tameness; be the subject what it will (and he could not easily have chosen one more impracticable), he impresses upon whatever scenes he describes so much movement and activity,—he infuses into his narrative such a flow of life, and, if we may so express ourselves, of animal spirits, that without satisfying the judgment, or moving the feelings, or elevating the mind, or even very greatly interesting the curiosity, he is able to seize upon, and, as it were, exhilarate the imagination of his readers, in a manner which is often truly unaccountable. This quality Mr. Scott possesses in an admirable degree; and supposing that he had no other object in view than to convince the world of the great poetical powers with which he is gifted, the poem before us would be quite sufficient for his purpose. But this is of very inferior

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* John Ballantyne put forth the following paragraph in the Scots Magazine of December, 1814:—

"Mr. Scott's poem of the Lord of the Isles will appear early in January. The Author of Waverley is about to amuse the public with a new novel, in three volumes, entitled Guy Mannering."

importance to the public; what they want is a good poem, and, as experience has shown, this can only be constructed upon a solid foundation of taste, and judgment, and meditation."

These passages appear to me to condense the result of deliberate and candid reflection, and I have therefore quoted them. The most important remarks of either Essayist on the details of the plot and execution are annexed to the last edition of the poem; and show such an exact coincidence of judgment in two masters of their calling, as had not hitherto been exemplified in the professional criticism of his metrical romances. The defects which both point out, are, I presume, but too completely explained by the preceding statement of the rapidity with which this, the last of those great performances, had been thrown off; nor do I see that either Reviewer has failed to do sufficient justice to the beauties which redeem the imperfections of the Lord of the Isles—except as regards the whole character of Bruce, its real hero, and the picture of the Battle of Bannockburn, which, now that one can compare these works from something like the same point of view, does not appear to me in the slightest particular inferior to the Flodden of Marmion.

This poem is now, I believe, about as popular as Rokeby; but it has never reached the same station in general favour with the Lay, Marmion, or the Lady of the Lake. The first edition of 1800 copies in quarto, was, however, rapidly disposed of, and the separate editions in 8vo., which ensued before his poetical works were collected, amounted together to 12,250 copies. This, in the case of almost any other author, would have been splendid success; but as compared with what he had previously experienced, even in his Rokeby, and still more so, as compared with the enormous circulation at once attained by Lord Byron's early tales, which were then following each other in almost breathless succession, the falling off was decided. One evening, some days after the poem had been published, Scott requested James Ballantyne to call on him, and the Printer found him alone in his library, working at the third volume of Guy Mannering. I give what follows, from Ballantyne's *Memoranda*:—

"'Well, James,' he said, 'I have given you a week—what are people saying about the Lord of the Isles?' I hesitated a little, after the fashion of Gil Blas, but he speedily brought the matter to a point. 'Come,' he said, 'speak out, my good fellow; what has put it into your head to be on so much ceremony *with me* all of a sudden? But, I see how it is, the result is given in one word—*Disappointment*.' My silence admitted his inference to the fullest extent. His countenance certainly did look rather blank for a few seconds; in truth, he had been wholly unprepared for the event; for it is a singular fact that before the public, or rather the booksellers, had given their decision, he no more knew whether he had written well or ill, than whether a die thrown out of a box was to turn up a size or an ace. However, he instantly resumed his spirits, and expressed his wonder rather that his poetical popularity should have continued so long, than that it should have now at last given way. At length, he said with perfect cheerfulness, 'Well, well, James, so be it—but you know we must not droop, for we can't afford to give over. Since one line has failed, we must just stick to something else:'—and so he dismissed me, and resumed his novel."

Ballantyne concludes the anecdote in these words:—

"He spoke thus, probably unaware of the undiscovered wonders then slumbering in his mind. Yet still he could not but have felt that the production of a few poems was nothing in comparison of what must be in reserve for him, for he was at this time scarcely more than forty.* An evening or two after, I called again on him, and found on the table a copy of the Giaour, which he seemed to have been reading. Having an enthusiastic young lady in my house, I asked him if I might carry the book home with me, but chancing to glance on the autograph blazon, '*To the Monarch of Parnassus, from one of his subjects*,' instantly retracted my request, and said I had not observed Lord Byron's inscription before. 'What inscription?' said he; 'O yes, I had forgot, but inscription or no inscription, you are equally welcome.' I again took it up, and he continued, 'James, Byron hits the mark where I don't even pretend to fledge my arrow.' At this time he had never seen Byron, but I knew he meant soon to be in London, when, no doubt, the mighty consummation of the meeting of the two bards would be accomplished; and I ventured to say that he must be looking forward to it with some interest. His countenance became fixed, and he answered impressively, 'O, of course.' In a minute or two afterwards he rose from his chair, paced the room at a very rapid rate, which was his practice in certain moods of mind, then made a dead halt, and bursting into an extravaganza of laughter, 'James,' cried he, 'I'll tell you what Byron should say to me when we are about to accost each other—

"Art thou the man whom men famed Grizzle call?"

'And then how germane would be my answer—

"Art thou the still more famed Tom Thumb the small?"'

"This," says the printer, "is a specimen of his peculiar humour; it kept him full of mirth for the rest of the evening."

The whole of the scene strikes me as equally and delightfully characteristic; I may add, hardly more so of Scott than of his printer; for Ballantyne, with all his profound worship of his friend and benefactor, was in truth, even more than he, an undoubting acquiescer in "the decision of the public, or rather of the booksellers;" and among the many absurdities into which his reverence for the popedom of Paternoster Row led him, I never could but consider, with special astonishment, the facility with which he seemed to have adopted the notion that the Byron of 1814 was really entitled to supplant Scott as a popular poet. Appreciating, as a man of his talents could hardly fail to do, the splendidly original glow and depth of Childe Harold, he always appeared to me quite blind to the fact, that in the Giaour, in the Bride of Abydos, in Parisina, and indeed, in all his early serious narratives, Byron owed at least half his success to clever, though perhaps unconscious imitation of Scott, and no trivial share of the rest to the lavish use of materials which Scott never employed, only because his genius was, from the beginning to the end of his career, under the guidance of high and chivalrous feelings of moral rectitude. All this Lord Byron himself seems to have felt most completely—as witness the whole sequence of his letters and diaries;* and I think I see many symptoms that both the decision of the million, and its index, "the decision of the booksellers," tend the same way at present; but my business is to record, as far as my means may permit, the growth and structure of one great mind, and the effect which it produced upon the actual witnesses of its manifestations, not to obtrude the conjectures of a partial individual as to what rank posterity may assign it amongst or above contemporary rivals.

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* He was not forty-four till August, 1815.

† *E. G.* "If they want to depose Scott, I only wish they would not set me up as a competitor. I like the man—and admire his works to what Braham calls *Entusymusy*. All such stuff can only vex him, and do me no good."—Byron (1813), vol. ii. p. 259.

"Scott is certainly the most wonderful writer of the day. His novels are a new literature in themselves, and his poetry as good as any—if not better—(only on an erroneous system)—and only ceased to be popular, because the vulgar learned were tired of hearing 'Aristides called the Just,' and Scott the Best, and ostracised him."—Byron (1821), vol. v. p. 72.

The following letter was addressed to Lord Byron on the receipt of that copy of the Giaour to which Mr. Ballantyne's Memorandum refers: I believe the inscription to Scott first appeared on the ninth edition of the poem.

To the Right Hon. Lord Byron, London.

"My Lord,

"I have long owed you my best thanks for the uncommon pleasure I had in perusing your high-spirited Turkish fragment. But I should hardly have ventured to offer them, well knowing how you must be overwhelmed by volunteer intrusions of approbation—(which always look as if the writer valued his opinion at fully more than it may be worth)—unless I had to-day learned that I have an apology for entering upon the subject, from your having so kindly sent me a copy of the poem. I did not receive it sooner, owing to my absence from Edinburgh, where it had been lying quietly at my house in Castle Street; so that I must have seemed ungrateful, when, in truth, I was only modest. The last offence may be forgiven, as not common in a lawyer and poet; the first is said to be equal to the crime of witchcraft, but many an act of my life has shown that I am no conjurer. If I were, however, ten times more modest than twenty years' attendance at the bar renders probable, your flattering inscription would cure me of so unfashionable a malady. I might, indeed, lately have had a legal title to as much supremacy on Parnassus as can be conferred by a sign-manual, for I had a very flattering offer of the laurel, but as I felt obliged, for a great many reasons, to decline it, I am altogether unconscious of any other title to sit high upon the forked hill.

"To return to the Giaour; I had lent my first edition, but the whole being imprinted in my memory, I had no difficulty in tracing the additions, which are great improvements, as I should have conjectured aforehand merely from their being additions. I hope your lordship intends to proceed with this fascinating style of composition. You have access to a stream of sentiments, imagery, and manners which are so little known to us as to convey all the interest of novelty, yet so endeared to us by the early perusal of Eastern tales, that we are not embarrassed with utter ignorance upon the subject. Vathek, bating some passages, would have made a charming subject for a tale. The conclusion is truly grand. I would give a great deal to know the originals from which it was drawn. Excuse this hasty scrawl, and believe me, my lord, your lordship's much obliged, very humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT."

If January brought the writer of this letter "disappointment," there was abundant consolation in store for February, 1815. Guy Mannering was received with eager curiosity, and pronounced by acclamation fully worthy to share the honours of Waverley. The easy transparent flow of its style; the beautiful simplicity, and here and there the wild solemn magnificence of its sketches of scenery: the rapid, ever-heightening interest of the narrative; the unaffected kindliness of feeling, the manly purity of thought, everywhere mingled with a gentle humour and a homely sagacity; but above all, the rich variety and skilful contrast of characters and manners, at once fresh in fiction and stamped with the unforgeable seal of truth and nature:—these were charms that spoke to every heart and mind; and the few murmurs of pedantic criticism were lost in the voice of general delight, which never fails to welcome the invention that introduces to the sympathy of imagination a new group of immortal realities.

The earlier chapters of the present narrative have anticipated much of what I might, perhaps with better judgment, have reserved for this page. Taken together with the author's introduction and notes, those anecdotes of his days of youthful wandering must, however, have enabled the reader to trace almost as minutely as he could wish, the sources from which the novelist drew his materials, both of scenery and character; and Mr. Train's *Durham Garland*,* exhausts my information concerning the humble groundwork on which fancy reared this delicious romance.

The first edition was, like that of Waverley, in three little volumes, with a humility of paper and printing which the meanest novelist would now disdain to imitate; the price a guinea. The 2000 copies of which it consisted were sold the day after the publication; and within three months came a second and a third impression, making together 5000 copies more. The sale, before those novels began to be collected, had reached nearly 10,000; and since then (to say nothing of foreign reprints of the text, and myriads of translations into every tongue of Europe) the domestic sale has amounted to 50,000.

On the rising of the Court of Session in March, Mr. and Mrs. Scott went by sea to London with their eldest girl, whom, being yet too young for general society, they again deposited with Joanna Baillie at Hampstead, while they themselves resumed, for two months, their usual quarters at kind Miss Dumergue's, in Piccadilly. Six years had elapsed since Scott last appeared in the metropolis; and brilliant as his reception had then been, it was still more so on the present occasion. Scotland had been visited in the interim, chiefly from the interest excited by his writings, by crowds of the English nobility, most of whom had found introduction to his personal acquaintance—not a few had partaken of his hospitality at Ashestiel or Abbotsford. The generation among whom, I presume, a genius of this order feels his own influence with the proudest and sweetest confidence—on whose fresh minds and ears he has himself made the first indelible impressions—the generation with whose earliest romance of the heart and fancy his idea had been blended, was now grown to the full stature; the success of these recent novels, seen on every table, the subject of every conversation, had, with those who did not doubt their parentage, far more than counterweighed his declination, dubious after all, in the poetical balance; while the mystery that hung over them quickened the curiosity of the hesitating and conjecturing many—and the name on which ever and anon some new circumstance accumulated stronger suspicion, loomed larger through the haze in which he had thought fit to envelope it. Moreover this was a period of high national pride and excitement.

"O who, that shared them, ever shall forget
The emotions of the spirit-rousing time,
When breathless in the mart the couriers met,
Early and late, at evening and at prime;

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* See *ante*, page 551.

When the loud cannon and the merry chime
Hail'd news on news, as field on field was won,
When Hope, long doubtful, soared at length sublime,
And our glad eyes, awake as day begun,
Watch'd Joy's broad banner rise to meet the rising sun?

"O these were hours, when thrilling joy repaid
A long, long course of darkness, doubts, and fears!
The heart-sick faintness of the hope delayed,
The waste, the woe, the bloodshed, and the tears,
That tracked with terror twenty rolling years—
All was forgot in that blithe jubilee.
Her downcast eye even pale Affliction rears,
To sigh a thankful prayer, amid the glee
That hailed the Despot's fall, and peace and liberty!"*

At such a time Prince and people were well prepared to hail him who, more perhaps than any other master of the pen, had contributed to sustain the spirit of England throughout the struggle, which was as yet supposed to have been terminated on the field of Thoulouse. "Thank Heaven you are coming at last"—Joanna Baillie had written a month or two before—"Make up your mind to be stared at only a little less than the Czar of Muscovy, or old Blucher."

And now took place James Ballantyne's "mighty consummation of the meeting of the two bards." Scott's own account of it, in a letter to Mr. Moore, must be in the hands of most of my readers; yet I think it ought also to find a place here:—

"It was" (says Scott) "in the spring of 1815 that, chancing to be in London, I had the advantage of a personal introduction to Lord Byron. Report had prepared me to meet a man of peculiar habits and a quick temper, and I had some doubts whether we were likely to suit each other in society. I was most agreeably disappointed in this respect. I found Lord Byron in the highest degree courteous, and even kind. We met for an hour or two almost daily, in Mr. Murray's drawing-room, and found a great deal to say to each other. We also met frequently in parties and evening society, so that for about two months I had the advantage of a considerable intimacy with this distinguished individual. Our sentiments agreed a good deal, except upon the subjects of religion and politics, upon neither of which I was inclined to believe that Lord Byron entertained very fixed opinions. I remember saying to him, that I really thought that if he lived a few years he would alter his sentiments. He answered, rather sharply, 'I suppose you are one of those who prophesy I shall turn Methodist.' I replied, 'No—I don't expect your conversion to be of such an ordinary kind. I would rather look to see you retreat upon the Catholic faith, and distinguish yourself by the austerity of your penances. The species of religion to which you must, or may, one day attach yourself, must exercise a strong power on the imagination.' He smiled gravely, and seemed to allow I might be right.

"On politics, he used sometimes to express a high strain of what is now called Liberalism; but it appeared to me that the pleasure it afforded him, as a vehicle for displaying his wit and satire against individuals in office, was at the bottom of this habit of thinking, rather than any real conviction of the political principles on which he talked. He was certainly proud of his rank and ancient family, and, in that respect, as much an aristocrat as was consistent with good sense and good breeding. Some disgusts, how adopted I know not, seemed to me to have given this peculiar (and, as it appeared to me) contradictory cast of mind: but, at heart, I would have termed Byron a patrician on principle.

"Lord Byron's reading did not seem to me to have been very extensive either in poetry or history. Having the advantage of him in that respect, and possessing a good competent share of such reading as is little read, I was sometimes able to put under his eye objects which had for him the interest of novelty. I remember particularly repeating to him the fine poem of Hardyknute, an imitation of the old Scottish ballad, with which he was so much affected, that some one who was in the same apartment asked me what I could possibly have been telling Byron by which he was so much agitated.

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* Lord of the Isles, Canto vi. 1.

"I saw Byron for the last time in 1815, after I returned from France. He dined, or lunched, with me at Long's, in Bond Street. I never saw him so full of gaiety and good-humour, to which the presence of Mr. Mathews, the comedian, added not a little. Poor Terry was also present. After one of the gayest parties I ever was present at, my fellow-traveller, Mr. Scott of Gala, and I set off for Scotland, and I never saw Lord Byron again. Several letters passed between us—one perhaps every half year. Like the old heroes in Homer, we exchanged gifts. I gave Byron a beautiful dagger mounted with gold, which had been the property of the redoubted Elfi Bey. But I was to play the part of Diomed in the Iliad, for Byron sent me, some time after, a large sepulchral vase of silver. It was full of dead men's bones, and had inscriptions on two sides of the base. One ran thus:—'The bones contained in this urn were found in certain ancient sepulchres within the long walls of Athens, in the month of February, 1811.' The other face bears the lines of Juvenal —'*Expende—quot libras in duce summo invenies?—Mors sola fatetur quantula sint hominum corpuscula.*'

"To these I have added a third inscription, in these words—'The gift of Lord Byron to Walter Scott.'* There was a letter with this vase, more valuable to me than the gift itself, from the kindness with which the donor expressed himself towards me. I left it naturally in the urn with the bones; but it is now missing. As the theft was not of a nature to be practised by a mere domestic, I am compelled to suspect the inhospitality of some individual of higher station, most gratuitously exercised certainly, since, after what I have here said, no one will probably choose to boast of possessing this literary curiosity.

"We had a good deal of laughing, I remember, on what the public might be supposed to think, or say, concerning the gloomy and ominous nature of our mutual gifts.

"I think I can add little more to my recollections of Byron. He was often melancholy—almost gloomy. When I observed him in this humour, I used either to wait till it went off of its own accord, or till some natural and easy mode occurred of leading him into conversation, when the shadows almost always left his countenance, like the mist arising from a landscape. In conversation he was very animated.

"I met with him very frequently in society; our mutual acquaintances doing me the honour to think that he liked to meet with me. Some very agreeable parties I can recollect—particularly one at Sir George Beaumont's—where the amiable landlord had assembled some persons distinguished for talent. Of these I need only mention the late Sir Humphry Davy, whose talents for literature were as remarkable as his empire over science. Mr. Richard Sharpe and Mr. Rogers were also present.

"I think I also remarked in Byron's temper starts of suspicion, when he seemed to pause and consider whether there had not been a secret, and perhaps offensive, meaning in something casually said to him. In this case, I also judged it best to let his mind, like a troubled spring, work itself clear, which it did in a minute or two. I was considerably older, you will recollect, than my noble friend, and had no reason to fear his misconstruing my sentiments towards him, nor had I ever the slightest reason to doubt that they were kindly returned on his part. If I had occasion to be mortified by the display of genius which threw into the shade such pretensions as I was then supposed to possess, I might console myself that, in my own case, the materials of mental happiness had been mingled in a greater proportion.

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* Mr. Murray had, at the time of giving the vase, suggested to Lord Byron, that it would increase the value of the gift to add some such inscription; but the noble poet answered modestly:—

"April 9, 1815.

"Dear Murray—I have a great objection to your proposition about inscribing the vase —which is, that it would appear *ostentatious* on my part; and of course I must send it as it is, without any alteration. Yours ever, BYRON."

"I rummage my brains in vain for what often rushes into my head unbidden—little traits and sayings which recall his looks, manner, tone, and gestures; and I have always continued to think that a crisis of life was arrived in which a new career of fame was opened to him, and that had he been permitted to start upon it, he would have obliterated the memory of such parts of his life as friends would wish to forget."

I have nothing to add to this interesting passage, except that Joanna Baillie's tragedy of The Family Legend being performed at one of the theatres during Scott's stay in town, Lord Byron accompanied the authoress and Mr. and Mrs. Scott to witness the representation; and that the vase with the Attic bones appears to have been sent to Scott very soon after his arrival in London, not, as Mr. Moore had gathered from the hasty diction of his "Reminiscences," at some "subsequent period of their acquaintance." This is sufficiently proved by the following note:—

To the Right Honourable Lord Byron, &c. &c.

"Piccadilly, Monday.

"My dear Lord,

"I am not a little ashamed of the value of the shrine in which your Lordship has enclosed the Attic relics; but were it yet more costly, the circumstance could not add value to it in my estimation, when considered as a pledge of your Lordship's regard and friendship. The principal pleasure which I have derived from my connexion with literature, has been the access which it has given me to those who are distinguished by talents and accomplishments; and, standing so high as your Lordship justly does in that rank, my satisfaction in making your acquaintance has been proportionally great. It is one of those wishes which, after having been long and earnestly entertained, I have found completely gratified upon becoming personally known to you; and I trust you will permit me to profit by it frequently, during my stay in town. I am, my dear Lord, your truly obliged and faithful WALTER SCOTT."

It was also in the spring of 1815 that Scott had, for the first time, the honour of being presented to the Prince Regent. His Royal Highness had (as has been seen from a letter to Joanna Baillie, already quoted) signified, more than a year before this time, his wish that the poet should revisit London—and, on reading his Edinburgh Address in particular, he said to Mr. Dundas, that "Walter Scott's charming behaviour about the laureateship had made him doubly desirous of seeing him at Carlton House." More lately, on receiving a copy of the Lord of the Isles, his Royal Highness's librarian had been commanded to write to him in these terms:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Edinburgh.

"Carlton House, January 19, 1815.

"My dear Sir,

"You are deservedly so great a favourite with the Prince Regent, that his librarian is not only directed to return you the thanks of his Royal Highness for your valuable present, but to inform you that the Prince Regent particularly wishes to see you whenever you come to London; and desires you will always, when you are there, come into his library whenever you please. Believe me always, with sincerity, one of your warmest admirers and most obliged friends,

J. S. CLARKE."

On hearing from Mr. Croker (then Secretary to the Admiralty) that Scott was to be in town by the middle of March, the Prince said—

"Let me know when he comes, and I'll get up a snug little dinner that will suit him;" and, after he had been presented and graciously received at the *levee*, he was invited to dinner accordingly, through his excellent friend Mr. Adam (now Lord Chief Commissioner of the Jury Court in Scotland), who at that time held a confidential office in the royal household. The Regent had consulted with Mr. Adam also as to the composition of the party. "Let us have," said he, "just a few friends of his own—and the more Scotch the better;" and both the Chief Commissioner and Mr. Croker assure me that the party was the most interesting and agreeable one in their recollection. It comprised, I believe, the Duke of York—the late Duke of Gordon (then Marquess of Huntly)—the Marquess of Hertford (then Lord Yarmouth)—the Earl of Fife—and Scott's early friend Lord Melville. "The Prince and Scott," says Mr. Croker, "were the two most brilliant story-tellers in their several ways, that I have ever happened to meet; they were both aware of their *forte*, and both exerted themselves that evening with delightful effect. On going home, I really could not decide which of them had shone the most. The Regent was enchanted with Scott, as Scott with him; and on all his subsequent visits to London, he was a frequent guest at the royal table." The Lord Chief Commissioner remembers that the Prince was particularly delighted with the poet's anecdotes of the old Scotch judges and lawyers, which his Royal Highness sometimes *capped* by ludicrous traits of certain ermined sages of his own acquaintance. Scott told, among others, a story, which he was fond of telling, of his old friend the Lord Justice-Clerk Braxfield; and the commentary of his Royal Highness on hearing it amused Scott, who often mentioned it afterwards. The anecdote is this:—Braxfield, whenever he went on a particular circuit, was in the habit of visiting a gentleman of good fortune in the neighbourhood of one of the assize towns, and staying at least one night, which, being both of them ardent chess-players, they usually concluded with their favourite game. One Spring circuit the battle was not decided at daybreak, so the Justice-Clerk said, —"Weel, Donald, I must e'en come back this gate in the harvest, and let the game lie ower for the present;" and back he came in October, but not to his old friend's hospitable house; for that gentleman had, in the interim, been apprehended on a capital charge (of forgery), and his name stood on the *Porteous Roll*, or list of those who were about to be tried under his former guest's auspices. The laird was indicted and tried accordingly, and the jury returned a verdict of *guilty*. Braxfield forthwith put on his cocked hat (which answers to the black cap in England), and pronounced the sentence of the law in the usual terms—"To be hanged by the neck until you be dead; and may the Lord have mercy upon your unhappy soul!" Having concluded this awful formula in his most sonorous cadence, Braxfield, dismounting his formidable beaver, gave a familiar nod to his unfortunate acquaintance, and said to him, in a sort of chuckling whisper—"And now Donald, my man, I think I've checkmated you for ance." The Regent laughed heartily at this specimen of Macqueen's brutal humour; and "I'faith, Walter," said he, "this old big-wig seems to have taken things as coolly as my tyrannical self. Don't you remember Tom Moore's description of me at breakfast—

'The table spread with tea and toast,
Death-warrants and the Morning Post?' "

Towards midnight, the Prince called for "a bumper, with all the honours, to the Author of Waverley," and looked significantly, as he was charging his own glass, to Scott. Scott seemed somewhat puzzled for a moment, but instantly recovering himself, and filling his glass to the brim, said, "Your royal highness looks as if you thought I had some claim to the honours of this toast. I have no such pretensions, but shall take good care that the real Simon Pure hears of the high compliment that has now been paid him." He then drank off his claret, and joined with a stentorian voice in the cheering, which the Prince himself timed. But before the company could resume their seats, his Royal Highness exclaimed, "Another of the same, if you please, to the Author of Marmion—and now, Walter, my man, I have checkmated you for *ance*." The second bumper was followed by cheers still more prolonged: and Scott then rose and returned thanks in a short address, which struck the Lord Chief Commissioner as "alike grave and graceful." This story has been circulated in a very perverted shape. I now give it on the authority of my venerated friend, who was—unlike, perhaps, some others of the company at that hour—able to hear accurately, and content to *see single*.—He adds, that having occasion, the day after, to call on the Duke of York, his Royal Highness said to him—"Upon my word, Adam, my brother went rather too near the wind about Waverley—but nobody could have turned the thing more prettily than Walter Scott did—and upon the whole I never had better fun."

The Regent, as was his custom with those he most delighted to honour, uniformly addressed the poet, even at their first dinner, by his Christian name, "Walter."

Before he left town he again dined at Carlton House, when the party was a still smaller one than before, and the merriment, if possible, still more free. That nothing might be wanting, the Prince sung several capital songs in the course of that evening—as witness the lines in *Sultan Serendib*—

"I love a Prince will bid the bottle pass,
Exchanging with his subjects glance and glass,
In fitting time can, gayest of the gay,
Keep up the jest and mingle in the lay.
Such Monarchs best our freeborn humour suit,
But despots must be stately, stern, and mute."

Before he returned to Edinburgh, on the 22d of May, the Regent sent him a gold snuff-box, set in brilliants, with a medallion of his Royal Highness's head on the lid, "as a testimony" (writes Mr. Adam, in transmitting it) "of the high opinion his Royal Highness entertains of your genius and merit."

I transcribe what follows, from James Ballantyne's *Memoranda*:—

"After Mr. Scott's first interview with his Sovereign, one or two intimate friends took the liberty of inquiring, what judgment he had formed of the Regent's talents? He declined giving any definite answer—but repeated, that 'he was the first gentleman he had seen—certainly the first *English* gentleman of his day;—there was something about him which, independently of the *prestige*, the "divinity," which hedges a King, marked him as standing entirely by himself; but as to his abilities, spoken of as distinct from his charming manners, how could any one form a fair judgment of that man who introduced whatever subject he chose, discussed it just as long as he chose, and dismissed it when he chose?'"

Ballantyne adds,—

> "What I have now to say is more important, not only in itself, but as it will enable you to give a final contradiction to an injurious report which has been in circulation; viz. that the Regent asked him as to the authorship of Waverley, and received a distinct and solemn denial. I took the bold freedom of requesting to know *from him* whether his Royal Highness had questioned him on that subject, and what had been his answer. He glanced at me with a look of wild surprise, and said, 'What answer I might have made to such a question, put to me by my sovereign, perhaps I do not, or rather perhaps I do know; but I was never put to the test. He is far too well-bred a man ever to put so ill-bred a question.'"

The account I have already given of the convivial scene alluded to would probably have been sufficient; but it can do no harm to place Ballantyne's, or rather Scott's own testimony also on record.

I ought not to have omitted, that during Scott's residence in London, in April 1815, he lost one of the English friends, to a meeting with whom he had looked forward with the highest pleasure. Mr. George Ellis died on the 15th of that month, at his seat of Sunninghill. This threw a cloud over what would otherwise have been a period of unmixed enjoyment. Mr. Canning penned the epitaph for that dearest of his friends; but he submitted it to Scott's consideration before it was engraved.

CHAPTER XXXV.

BATTLE OF WATERLOO—LETTER OF SIR CHARLES BELL—VISIT TO THE CONTINENT—WATERLOO—LETTERS FROM BRUSSELS AND PARIS—ANECDOTES OF SCOTT AT PARIS—THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON—THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER—BLUCHER—PLATOFF—PARTY AT ERMENONVILLE, &c.—LONDON—PARTING WITH LORD BYRON—SCOTT'S BIRMINGHAM KNIFE—RETURN TO ABBOTSFORD—ANECDOTES BY MR. SKENE AND JAMES BALLANTYNE.—1815.

GOETHE expressed, I fancy, a very general sentiment, when he said, that to him the great charm and value of my friend's Life of Buonaparte seemed quite independent of the question of its accuracy as to small details; that he turned eagerly to the book, not to find dates sifted, and countermarches analyzed, but to contemplate what could not but be a true record of the broad impressions made on the mind of Scott by the marvellous revolutions of his own time in their progress. Feeling how justly in the main that work has preserved those impressions, though gracefully softened and sobered in the retrospect of peaceful and more advanced years, I the less regret that I have it not in my power to quote any letters of his touching the reappearance of Napoleon on the soil of France—the immortal march from Cannes—the reign of the Hundred Days, and the preparations for another struggle, which fixed the gaze of Europe in May 1815.

That he should have been among the first civilians who hurried over to see the field of Waterloo, and hear English bugles sound about the walls of Paris, could have surprised none who knew the lively concern he had always taken in the military efforts of his countrymen, and the career of the illustrious captain, who had taught them to re-establish the renown of Agincourt and Blenheim,—

> "Victor of Assaye's Eastern plain,
> Victor of all the fields of Spain."

I had often heard him say, however, that his determination was, if not fixed, much quickened, by a letter of an old acquaintance of his, who had, on the arrival of the news of the 18th of June, instantly repaired to Brussels, to tender his professional skill in aid of the over-burdened medical staff of the conqueror's army. When, therefore, I found the letter in question preserved among Scott's papers, I perused it with a peculiar interest; and I now venture, with the writer's permission, to present it to the reader. It was addressed by Sir Charles Bell to his brother, an eminent barrister in Edinburgh, who transmitted it to Scott. "When I read it," said he, "it set me on fire." The marriage of Miss Maclean Clephane of Torloisk with the Earl of Compton (now Marquis of Northampton), which took place on the 24th of July, was in fact the only cause why he did not leave Scotland instantly; for that dear young friend had chosen Scott for her guardian, and on him accordingly devolved the chief care of the arrangements on this occasion. The extract sent to him by Mr. George Joseph Bell is as follows:—

"Brussels, 2d July, 1815.

"This country, the finest in the world, has been of late quite out of our minds. I did not in any degree anticipate the pleasure I should enjoy, the admiration forced from me, on coming into one of these antique towns, or in journeying through this rich garden. Can you recollect the time when there were gentlemen meeting at the Cross of Edinburgh, or those whom we thought such? They are all collected here. You see the very men, with their scraggy necks sticking out of the collars of their old-fashioned square-skirted coats—their canes—their cocked-hats; and, when they meet, the formal bow, the hat off to the ground, and the powder flying in the wind. I could divert you with the odd resemblances of the Scottish faces among the peasants, too—but I noted *them* at the time with my pencil, and I write to you only of things that you wont find in my pocket-book.

"I have just returned from seeing the French wounded received in their hospital; and could you see them laid out naked, or almost so—100 in a row of low beds on the ground—though wounded, exhausted, beaten, you would still conclude with me that these were men capable of marching unopposed from the west of Europe to the east of Asia. Strong, thickset, hardy veterans, brave spirits and unsubdued, as they cast their wild glance upon you,—their black eyes and brown cheeks finely contrasted with the fresh sheets,—you would much admire their capacity of adaptation. These fellows are brought from the field after lying many days on the ground; many dying—many in the agony—many miserably racked with pain and spasms; and the next mimicks his fellow, and gives it a tune,—*Aha, vous chantez bien!* How they are wounded you will see in my notes. But I must not have you to lose the present impression on me of the formidable nature of these fellows as exemplars of the breed in France. It is a forced praise; for from all I have seen, and all I have heard of their fierceness, cruelty, and bloodthirstiness, I cannot convey to you my detestation of this race of trained banditti. By what means they are to be kept in subjection until other habits come upon them, I know not; but I am convinced that these men cannot be left to the bent of their propensities.

"This superb city is now ornamented with the finest groups of armed men that the most romantic fancy could dream of. I was struck with the words of a friend —E.: 'I saw,' said he, '*that* man returning from the field on the 16th.'—(This was a Brunswicker of the Black or Death Hussars.)—'He was wounded, and had had his arm amputated on the field. He was among the first that came in. He rode straight and stark upon his horse—the bloody clouts about his stump—pale as death, but upright, with a stern, fixed expression of feature, as if loth to lose his revenge.' These troops are very remarkable in their fine military appearance; their dark and ominous dress sets off to advantage their strong, manly, northern features and white mustachios; and there is something more than commonly impressive about the whole effect.

"This is the second Sunday after the battle, and many are not yet dressed. There are 20,000 wounded in this town, besides those in the hospitals, and the many in the other towns;—only 3000 prisoners; 80,000, they say, killed and wounded on both sides."

I think it not wonderful that the extract should have set Scott's imagination effectually on fire; that he should have grasped at the idea of seeing probably the last shadows of real warfare that his own age would afford; or that some parts of the great surgeon's simple phraseology are reproduced, almost verbatim, in the first of "Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk." No sooner was Scott's purpose known, than some of his young neighbours in the country proposed to join his excursion; and, in company with three of them, namely, his kinsman, John Scott of Gala—Alexander Pringle, the younger, of Whytbank (now M. P. for Selkirkshire)—and Robert Bruce, advocate (now Sheriff of Argyle)—he left Edinburgh for the south, at 5 A. M., on the 27th of July.

They travelled by the stage-coach, and took the route of Hull and Lincoln to Cambridge; for *Gala* and *Whytbank*, being both members of that university, were anxious to seize this opportunity of revisiting it themselves, and showing its beautiful architecture to their friend. After this wish had been gratified, they proceeded to Harwich, and thence, on the 3d of August, took ship for Helvoetsluys.

"The weather was beautiful," says Gala, "so we all went outside the coach from Cambridge to Harwich. At starting, there was a general complaint of thirst, the consequence of some experiments overnight on the celebrated *bishop* of my *Alma Mater*; our friend, however, was in great glee, and never was a merrier *basket* than he made it all the morning. He had cautioned us, on leaving Edinburgh, never to *name names* in such situations, and our adherence to this rule was rewarded by some amusing incidents. For example, as we entered the town where we were to dine, a heavy-looking man, who was to stop there, took occasion to thank Scott for the pleasure his anecdotes had afforded him: 'You have a good memory, sir,' said he; 'mayhap, now, you sometimes write down what you hear or be a-reading about?' He answered very gravely, that he did occasionally put down a *few* notes, if anything struck him particularly. In the afternoon, it happened that he sat on the box, while the rest of us were behind him. Here, by degrees, he became quite absorbed in his own reflections. He frequently repeated to himself, or *composed* perhaps, for a good while, and often smiled or raised his hand, seeming completely occupied and amused. His neighbour, a vastly scientific and rather grave professor, in a smooth drab Benjamin and broad-brimmed beaver, cast many a curious sidelong glance at him, evidently suspecting that all was not right with the upper story, but preserved perfect politeness. The poet was, however, discovered by the captain of the vessel in which we crossed the Channel, and a perilous passage it was, chiefly in consequence of the unceasing tumblers in which this worthy kept drinking his health."

Before leaving Edinburgh, Scott had settled in his mind the plan of

"Paul's Letters;" for, on that same day, his agent, John Ballantyne, addressed the following letter, from his marine villa, near Newhaven:—

To Messrs. Constable & Co.

"Trinity, 27th July, 1815.

"Dear Sirs,

"Mr. Scott left town to-day for the Continent. He proposes writing from thence a series of letters on a peculiar plan, varied in matter and style, and to different supposititious correspondents.

"The work is to form a demy 8vo volume of twenty-two sheets, to sell at 12s. It is to be begun immediately on his arrival in France, and to be published, if possible, the second week of September, when he proposes to return.

"We print 3000 of this, and I am empowered to offer you one-third of the edition, Messrs. Longman & Co. and Mr. Murray having each the same share: the terms, twelve months' acceptance for paper and print, and half profits at six months, granted now, as under. The over copies will pay the charge for advertising. I am, &c.

John Ballantyne.

"Charge.

22 sheets printing,—	£3 15 0	£82 10 0
145 reams, demy,—	1 10 0	217 10 0
		£300 0 0
3000 at 8s.	£1200 0 0	
Cost,	300 0 0	
	£900 0 0	Profit—one-half is £450."

Before Scott reached Harwich, he knew that this offer had been accepted without hesitation; and thenceforth, accordingly, he threw his daily letters to his wife into the form of communications meant for an imaginary group, consisting of a spinster sister, a statistical laird, a rural clergyman of the Presbyterian Kirk, and a brother, a veteran officer on half-pay. The rank of this last personage corresponded, however, exactly with that of his own elder brother, John Scott, who also, like the Major of the book, had served in the Duke of York's unfortunate campaign of 1797; the sister is only a slender disguise for his aunt Christian Rutherfurd, already often mentioned; Lord Somerville, long President of the Board of Agriculture, was Paul's laird; and the shrewd and unbigoted Dr. Douglas of Galashiels was his "minister of the gospel." These epistles, after having been devoured by the little circle at Abbotsford, were transmitted to Major John Scott, his mother and Miss Rutherfurd, in Edinburgh; from their hands they passed to those of James Ballantyne and Mr. Erskine, both of whom assured me, that the copy ultimately sent to the press, consisted, in great part, of the identical sheets that had successively reached Melrose through the post. The rest had of course been, as Ballantyne expresses it, "somewhat cobbled;" but, on the whole, Paul's Letters are to be considered as a true and faithful journal of this expedition; insomuch, that I might perhaps content myself, in this place, with a simple reference to that delightful volume. He found time, however, to write letters during his absence from Britain, to some others of his friends; and a specimen or two of these may interest the reader. I have also gathered, from the companions of the journey, a few more particulars, which Scott's modesty withheld him from recording; and some trivial circumstances which occur to me, from recollection of his own conversation, may also be acceptable.

But I hope that, if the reader has not perused Paul's Letters recently, he will refresh his memory, before he proceeds further, by bestowing an hour on that genuine fragment of the author's autobiography. He is now, unless he had the advantage of Scott's personal familiarity, much better acquainted with the man than he could have been before he took up this compilation of his private correspondence —and especially before he perused the full diary of the light-house yacht in 1814; and a thousand little turns and circumstances which may have, when he originally read the book, passed lightly before his eye, will now, I venture to say, possess a warm and vivid interest, as inimitably characteristic of a departed friend. The kindest of husbands and fathers never portrayed himself with more unaffected truth than in this vain effort, if such he really fancied he was making, to sustain the character of "a cross old bachelor." The whole man, just as he was, breathes in every line, with all his compassionate and benevolent sympathy of heart, all his sharpness of observation, and sober shrewdness of reflection; all his enthusiasm for nature, for country life, for simple manners and simple pleasures, mixed up with an equally glowing enthusiasm, at which many may smile, for the tiniest relics of feudal antiquity—and last, not least, a pulse of physical rapture for the "circumstance of war," which bears witness to the blood of *Boltfoot* and *Fire the Braes*.

At Brussels, Scott found the small English garrison left there in command of Major-General Sir Frederick Adam, the son of his highly valued friend, the present Lord Chief Commissioner of the Jury Court in Scotland. Sir Frederick had been wounded at Waterloo, and could not as yet mount on horseback; but one of his aides-de-camp, Captain Campbell, escorted Scott and his party to the field of battle, on which occasion they were also accompanied by another old acquaintance of his, Major Pryse Gordon, who, being then on half-pay, happened to be domesticated with his family at Brussels. Major Gordon has since published two lively volumes of "Personal Memoirs;" and *Gala* bears witness to the fidelity of certain reminiscences of Scott at Brussels and Waterloo, which occupy one of the chapters of this work. I shall, therefore, extract the passage.

"Sir Walter Scott accepted my services to conduct him to Waterloo: the General's aide-de-camp was also of the party. He made no secret of his having undertaken to write something on the battle; and perhaps he took the greater interest on this account in every thing that he saw. Besides, he had never seen the field of such a conflict; and never having been before on the Continent, it was all new to his comprehensive mind. The day was beautiful; and I had the precaution to send out a couple of saddle-horses, that he might not be fatigued in walking over the fields, which had been recently ploughed up. In our rounds we fell in with Monsieur de Costar, with whom he got into conversation. This man had attracted so much notice by his pretended story of being about the person of Napoleon, that he was of too much importance to be passed by: I did not, indeed, know as much of this fellow's charlatanism at that time as afterwards, when I saw him confronted with a blacksmith of La Belle Alliance, who had been his companion in a hiding-place ten miles from the field during the whole day; a fact which he could not deny. But he had got up a tale so plausible and so profitable, that he could afford to bestow hush-money on the companion of his flight, so that the imposition was but little known; and strangers continued to be gulled. He had picked up a good deal of information about the position and details of the battle; and being naturally a sagacious Wallon, and speaking French pretty fluently, he became the favourite *cicerone*, and every lie he told was taken for gospel. Year after year, until his death in 1824, he continued his popularity, and raised the price of his rounds from a couple of francs to five; besides as much for the hire of a horse, his own property; for he pretended that the fatigue of walking so many hours was beyond his powers. It has been said that in this way he realized every summer a couple of hundred Napoleons.

"When Sir Walter had examined every point of defence and attack, we adjourned to the 'Original Duke of Wellington' at Waterloo, to lunch after the fatigues of the ride. Here he had a crowded levée of peasants, and collected a great many trophies, from cuirasses down to buttons and bullets. He picked up himself many little relics, and was fortunate in purchasing a grand cross of the legion of honour. But the most precious memorial was presented to him by my wife—a French soldier's book, well stained with blood, and containing some songs popular in the French army, which he found so interesting that he introduced versions of them in his 'Paul's Letters;' of which he did me the honour to send me a copy, with a letter, saying, 'that he considered my wife's gift as the most valuable of all his Waterloo relics.'

"On our return from the field, he kindly passed the evening with us, and a few friends whom we invited to meet him. He charmed us with his delightful conversation, and was in great spirits from the agreeable day he had passed; and with great good-humour promised to write a stanza in my wife's album. On the following morning he fulfilled his promise by contributing some beautiful verses on Hougomont. I put him into my little library to prevent interruption, as a great many persons had paraded in the *Parc* opposite my window to get a peep of the celebrated man, many having dogged him from his hotel.

"Brussels affords but little worthy of the notice of such a traveller as the Author of 'Waverley;' but he greatly admired the splendid tower of the Maison de Ville, and the ancient sculpture and style of architecture of the buildings which surround the Grand Place.

"He told us, with great humour, a laughable incident which had occurred to him at Antwerp. The morning after his arrival at that city from Holland, he started at an early hour to visit the tomb of Rubens in the Church of St. Jacques, before his party were up. After wandering about for some time, without finding the object he had in view, he determined to make enquiry, and observing a person stalking about, he addressed him in his best French; but the stranger, pulling off his hat, very respectfully replied in the pure Highland accent, 'I'm vary sorry, Sir, but I canna speak ony thing besides English.'—'This is very unlucky indeed, Donald,' said Sir Walter, 'but we must help one another; for to tell you the truth, I'm not good at any tongue but the English, or rather, the Scotch.'—'Oh, sir, maybe,' replied the Highlander, 'you are a countryman, and ken my maister Captain Cameron of the 79th, and could tell me whare he lodges. I'm just cum in, sir, frae a place they ca' *Machlin*,* and ha' forgotten the name of the captain's quarters; it was something like the *Laaborer*.'—'I can, I think, help you with this, my friend,' rejoined Sir Walter. 'There is an inn just opposite to you (pointing to the *Hotel du Grand Laboûrcur*): I dare say that will be the captain's quarters'; and it was so. I cannot do justice to the humour with which Sir Walter recounted this dialogue."†

The following is the letter which Scott addressed to the Duke of Buccleuch, immediately after seeing the field of Waterloo; and it may amuse the reader to compare it with Major Gordon's chapter, and with the writer's own fuller, and, of course, "cobbled" detail, in the pages of Paul:—

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* Mechlin—the Highlander gave it the familiar pronunciation of a Scotch village, Mauchline, celebrated in many of Burns's poems.

† See Major Gordon's Personal Memoirs, (1830), vol. ii. pp. 325–338.

To his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c.

"My dear Lord Duke,

"I promised to let you hear of my wanderings, however unimportant; and have now the pleasure of informing your Grace, that I am at this present time an inhabitant of the Premier Hotel de Cambrai, after having been about a week upon the Continent. We landed at Helvoet, and proceeded to Brussels, by Bergen-op Zoom and Antwerp, both of which are very strongly fortified. The ravages of war are little remarked in a country so rich by nature; but every thing seems at present stationary, or rather retrograde, where capital is required. The chateaux are deserted, and going to decay; no new houses are built, and those of older date are passing rapidly into the possession of a class inferior to those for whom we must suppose them to have been built. Even the old gentlewoman of Babylon has lost much of her splendour, and her robes and pomp are of a description far subordinate to the costume of her more magnificent days. The dresses of the priests were worn and shabby, both at Antwerp and Brussels, and reminded me of the decayed wardrobe of a bankrupt theatre: yet, though the gentry and priesthood have suffered, the eternal bounty of nature has protected the lower ranks against much distress. The unexampled fertility of the soil gives them all, and more than they want; and could they but sell the grain which they raise in the Netherlands, nothing else would be wanting to render them the richest people (common people, that is to say) in the world.

"On Wednesday last, I rode over the field of Waterloo, now for ever consecrated to immortality. The more ghastly tokens of the carnage are now removed, the bodies both of men and horses being either burned or buried; but all the ground is still torn with the shot and shells, and covered with cartridges, old hats, and shoes, and various relics of the fray which the peasants have not thought worth removing. Besides, at Waterloo and all the hamlets in the vicinage, there is a mart established for cuirasses; for the eagles worn by the imperial guard on their caps; for casques, swords, carabines, and similar articles. I have bought two handsome cuirasses, and intend them, one for Bowhill, and one for Abbotsford, if I can get them safe over, which Major Pryse Gordon has promised to manage for me. I have also, for your Grace, one of the little memorandum-books, which I picked up on the field, in which every French soldier was obliged to enter his receipts and expenditure, his services, and even his punishments. The field was covered with fragments of these records. I also got a good MS. collection of French songs, probably the work of some young officer, and a croix of the Legion of Honour. I enclose, under another cover, a sketch of the battle made at Brussels. It is not, I understand, strictly accurate; but sufficiently so to give a good notion of what took place. In fact, it would require twenty separate plans to give an idea of the battle at its various stages. The front, upon which the armies engaged, does not exceed a long mile. Our line, indeed, originally extended half-a-mile farther towards the village of Brain-la-Leude; but as the French indicated no disposition to attack in that direction, the troops which occupied this space were gradually concentrated by Lord Wellington, and made to advance till they had reached Hougomont—a sort of chateau, with a garden and wood attached to it, which was powerfully and effectually maintained by the Guards during the action. This place was particularly interesting. It was a quiet-looking gentleman's house, which had been burnt by the French shells. The defenders, burnt out of the house itself, betook themselves to the little garden, where, breaking loop-holes through the brick walls, they kept up a most destructive fire on the assailants, who had possessed themselves of a little wood which surrounds the villa on one side. In this spot vast numbers had fallen; and, being hastily buried, the smell is most offensive at this moment. Indeed, I felt the same annoyance in many parts of the field; and, did I live near the spot, I should be anxious about the diseases which this steaming carnage might occasion. The rest of the ground, excepting this chateau, and a farm-house called La Hay Sainte, early taken, and long held, by the French, because it was too close under the brow of the descent on which our artillery was placed to admit of the pieces being depressed so as to play into it,—the rest of the ground, I say, is quite open, and lies between two ridges, one of which (Mont St. Jean) was constantly occupied by the English; the other, upon which is the farm of La Belle Alliance, was the position of the French. The slopes between are gentle and varied; the ground everywhere practicable for cavalry, as was well experienced on that memorable day. The cuirassiers, despite their arms of proof, were quite inferior to our heavy dragoons. The meeting of the two bodies occasioned a noise, not unaptly compared to the tinkering and hammering of a smith's shop. Generally the cuirassiers came on stooping their heads very low, and giving point; the British frequently struck away their casques while they were in this position, and then laid at the bare head. Officers and soldiers all fought, hand to hand, without distinction; and many of the former owed their life to dexterity at their weapon, and personal strength of body. Shaw, the milling Life-Guards' man, whom your grace may remember among the champions of The Fancy, maintained the honour of the fist, and killed or disabled upwards of twenty Frenchmen, with his single arm, until he was killed by the assault of numbers. At one place, where there is a precipitous sand or gravel pit, the heavy English cavalry drove many of the cuirassiers over pell-mell, and followed over themselves like fox-hunters. The conduct of the infantry and artillery was equally, or, if possible, more distinguished, and it was all fully necessary; for, besides that our army was much outnumbered, a great part of the sum total were foreigners. Of these, the Brunswickers and Hanoverians behaved very well; the Belgians but sorrily enough. On one occasion, when a Belgic regiment fairly ran off, Lord Wellington rode up to them, and said, 'My lads, you must be a little blown; come, do take your breath for a moment, and then we'll go back, and try if we can do a little better;' and he actually carried them back to the charge. He was, indeed, upon that day, everywhere, and the soul of every thing; nor could less than his personal endeavours have supported the spirits of the men through a contest so long, so desperate, and so unequal. At his last attack, Buonaparte brought up 15,000 of his Guard, who had never drawn trigger during the day. It was upon their failure that his hopes abandoned him.

"I spoke long with a shrewd Flemish peasant, called John De Costar, whom he had seized upon as his guide, and who remained beside him the whole day, and afterwards accompanied him in his flight as far as Charleroi. Your Grace may be sure that I interrogated Mynheer very closely about what he heard and saw. He guided me to the spot where Buonaparte remained during the latter part of the action. It was in the highway from Brussels to Charleroi, where it runs between two high banks, on each of which was a French battery. He was pretty well sheltered from the English fire; and, though many bullets flew over his head, neither he nor any of his suite were touched. His other stations, during that day, were still more remote from all danger. The story of his having an observatory erected for him is a mistake. There is such a thing, and he repaired to it during the action; but it was built or erected some months before, for the purpose of a trigonometrical survey of the country, by the King of the Netherlands. Bony's last position was nearly fronting a tree, where the Duke of Wellington was stationed; there was not more than a quarter of a mile between them; but Bony was well sheltered, and the Duke so much exposed, that the tree is barked in several places by the cannon-balls levelled at him. As for Bony, De Costar says he was very cool during the whole day, and even gay. As the cannon-balls flew over them, De Costar ducked; at which the Emperor laughed, and told him they would hit him all the same. At length, about the time he made his grand and last effort, the fire of the Prussian artillery was heard upon his right, and the heads of their columns became visible pressing out of the woods. Aid-de-camp after aid-de-camp came with the tidings of their advance, to which Bony only replied, *attendez, attendez un instant*, until he saw his troops, *fantassins et cavaliers*, return in disorder from the attack. He then observed hastily to a general beside him, *je crois qu'ils sont mêlés.* The person to whom he spoke, hastily raised the spy-glass to his eye; but Bony, whom the first glance had satisfied of their total discomfiture, bent his face to the ground, and shook his head twice, his complexion being then as pale as death. The general then said something, to which Buonaparte answered, *c'est trop tard—sauvons nous.* Just at that moment, the allied troops, cavalry and infantry, appeared in full advance on all hands; and the Prussians, operating upon the right flank of the French, were rapidly gaining their rear. Bony, therefore, was compelled to abandon the high-road, which, besides, was choked with dead, with baggage, and with cannon; and, gaining the open country, kept at full gallop, until he gained, like Johnnie Cope, the van of the flying army. The marshals followed his example; and it was the most complete *sauve qui peut* that can well be imagined. Nevertheless, the prisoners who were brought into Brussels maintained their national impudence, and boldly avowed their intention of sacking the city with every sort of severity. At the same time they had friends there. One man of rank and wealth went over to Bony during the action, and I saw his hotel converted into an hospital for wounded soldiers. It occupied one-half of one of the sides of the Place Royale, a noble square, which your Grace has probably seen. But, in general, the inhabitants of Brussels were very differently disposed; and their benevolence to our poor wounded fellows was unbounded. The difficulty was to prevent them from killing their guests with kindness, by giving them butcher's-meat and wine during their fever. As I cannot put my letter into post until we get to Paris, I shall continue it as we get along.

"12*th August*, *Roye*, *in Picardy*.—I imagine your Grace about this time to be tolerably well fagged with a hard day on the moors. If the weather has been as propitious as with us, it must be delightful. The country through which we have travelled is most uncommonly fertile, and skirted with beautiful woods; but its present political situation is so very uncommon, that I would give the world your Grace had come over for a fortnight. France may be considered as neither at peace or war. Valenciennes, for example, is in a state of blockade; we passed through the posts of the allies, all in the utmost state of vigilance, with patroles of cavalry, and videttes of infantry, up to the very gates, and two or three batteries were manned and mounted. The French troops were equally vigilant at the gates, yet made no objections to our passing through the town. Most of them had the white cockade, but looked very sulky, and were in obvious disorder and confusion. They had not yet made their terms with the King, nor accepted a commander appointed by him; but as they obviously feel their party desperate, the soldiers are running from the officers, and the officers from the soldiers. In fact, the multiplied hosts which pour into this country, exhibiting all the various dresses and forms of war which can be imagined, must necessarily render resistance impracticable. Yet, like Satan, these fellows retain the unconquered propensity to defiance, even in the midst of defeat and despair. This morning we passed a great number of the disbanded garrison of Condé, and they were the most horrid-looking cut-throats I ever saw, extremely disposed to be very insolent, and only repressed by the consciousness that all the villages and towns around are occupied by the allies. They began by crying to us, in an ironical tone, *Vive le Roi*; then followed, *sotto voce*, *Sacre B——*, *Mille diables*, and other graces of French eloquence. I felt very well pleased that we were armed, and four in number; and still more so that it was daylight, for they seemed most mischievous ruffians. As for the appearance of the country, it is, notwithstanding a fine harvest, most melancholy. The windows of all the detached houses on the road are uniformly shut up; and you see few people, excepting the peasants who are employed in driving the contributions to maintain the armies. The towns are little better, having for the most part been partially injured by shells or by storm, as was the case both of Cambrai and Peronne. The men look very sulky; and if you speak three words to a woman, she is sure to fall a-crying. In short, the *politesse* and good humour of this people have fled with the annihilation of their self-conceit; and they look on you as if they thought you were laughing at them, or come to enjoy the triumph of our arms over theirs. Postmasters and landlords are all the same, and hardly to be propitiated even by English money, although they charge us about three times as much as they durst do to their countryfolks. As for the Prussians, a party of cavalry dined at our hotel at Mons, eat and drank of the best the poor devils had left to give, called for their horses, and laughed in the face of the landlord when he offered his bill, telling him they should pay as they came back. The English, they say, have always paid honourably, and upon these they indemnify themselves. It is impossible to *marchander*, for if you object, the poor landlady begins to cry, and tells you she will accept whatever *your lordship* pleases, but that she is almost ruined and bankrupt," &c. &c. &c.

"This is a long stupid letter, but I will endeavour to send a better from Paris. Ever your Grace's truly obliged,

WALTER SCOTT."

The only letter which Scott addressed to Joanna Baillie, while in Paris, goes over partly the same ground:—I transcribe the rest.

"Paris, 6th Sept. 1815.

"My dear Friend,

"I owe you a long letter, but my late travels and the date of this epistle will be a tolerable plea for your indulgence. The truth is, I became very restless after the battle of Waterloo, and was only detained by the necessity of attending a friend's marriage from setting off instantly for the Continent. At length, however, I got away to Brussels, and was on the memorable field of battle about five weeks after it had been fought. . . .

"If our army had been all British, the day would have been soon decided; but the Duke, or, as they call him here, from his detestation of all manner of foppery, the *Beau*, had not above 35,000 British. All this was to be supplied by treble exertion on the part of our troops. The Duke was everywhere during the battle: and it was the mercy of Heaven that protected him, when all his staff had been killed or wounded round him. I asked him, among many other questions, if he had seen Buonaparte; he said 'No; but at one time, from the repeated shouts of *Vive l'Empereur*, I thought he must be near.' This was when John De Costar placed him in the hollow way. I think, so near as I can judge, there may at that time have been a quarter of a mile between these two great generals.

"The fate of the French, after this day of decisive appeal, has been severe enough. There were never people more mortified, more subdued, and apparently more broken in spirit. They submit with sad civility to the extortions of the Prussians and the Russians, and avenge themselves at the expense of the English, whom they charge three prices for every thing, because they are the only people who pay at all. They are in the right, however, to enforce discipline and good order, which not only maintains the national character in the mean time, but will prevent the army from suffering by habits of indulgence. I question if the Prussians will soon regain their discipline and habits of hardihood. At present their powers of eating and drinking, which are really something preternatural, are exerted to the very utmost. A thin Prussian boy, whom I sometimes see, eats in one day as much as three English ploughmen. At daybreak he roars for chocolate and eggs; about nine he breakfasts more solemnly *à la fourchette*, when, besides all the usual apparatus of an English *déjeuner*, he eats a world of cutlets, oysters, fruit, &c., and drinks a glass of brandy and a bottle of champagne. His dinner might serve Garagantua, at which he gets himself about three parts drunk—a circumstance which does not prevent the charge upon cold meat, with tea and chocolate, about six o'clock; and concluding the whole with an immense supper. Positively the appetite of this lad reminds one of the Eastern tale of a man taken out of the sea by a ship's crew, who, in return, ate up all the provisions of the vessel. He was, I think, flown away with by a roc; but from what quarter of the heavens the French are to look for deliverance from these devourers, I cannot presume to guess.

"The needless wreck and ruin which they make in the houses, adds much to the inconvenience of their presence. Most of the châteaux, where the Prussians are quartered, are what is technically called *rumped*, that is to say, plundered out and out. In the fine château of Montmorency, for instance, the most splendid apartments, highly ornamented with gilding and carving, were converted into barracks for the dirtiest and most savage-looking hussars I have yet seen. Imagine the work these fellows make with velvet hangings and embroidery. I saw one hag boiling her camp-kettle with part of a picture frame; the picture itself has probably gone to Prussia. With all this greediness and love of mischief, the Prussians are not blood-thirsty; and their utmost violence seldom exceeds a blow or two with the flat of the sabre. They are also very civil to the women, and in both respects behave much better than the French did in their country; but they follow the bad example quite close enough for the sake of humanity and of discipline. As for our people, they live in a most orderly and regular manner. All the young men pique themselves on imitating the Duke of Wellington in *non-chalance* and coolness of manner; so they wander about everywhere, with their hands in the pockets of their long waistcoats, or cantering upon Cossack ponies, staring and whistling, and trotting to and fro, as if all Paris was theirs. The French hate them sufficiently for the *hauteur* of their manner and pretensions, but the grounds of dislike against us are drowned in the actual detestation afforded by the other powers.

"This morning I saw a grand military spectacle,—about 20,000 Russians pass in review before all the Kings and Dominations who are now resident at Paris. The Emperor, King of Prussia, Duke of Wellington, with their numerous and brilliant attendance of generals, staff-officers, &c., were in the centre of what is called the Place Louis Quinze, almost on the very spot where Louis XVI. was beheaded. A very long avenue, which faces the station where they were placed, was like a glowing furnace, so fiercely were the sunbeams reflected from the arms of the host by which it was filled. A body of Cossacks kept the ground with their pikes, and, by their wild appearance, added to the singularity of the scene. On one hand was the extended line of the Tuileries, seen through the gardens and the rows of orange trees; on the other, the long column of troops advancing to the music. Behind was a long colonnade, forming the front to the palace, where the Chamber of Representatives are to hold their sittings; and in front of the monarchs was a superb row of buildings, on which you distinguish the bronze pillar erected by Napoleon to commemorate his victories over Russia, Prussia, and Austria, whose princes were now reviewing their victorious armies in what was so lately his capital. Your fancy, my dear friend, will anticipate, better than I can express, the thousand sentiments which arose in my mind from witnessing such a splendid scene, in a spot connected with such various associations. It may give you some idea of the feelings of the French—once so fond of *spectacles*—to know that, I think, there were not a hundred of that nation looking on. Yet this country will soon recover the actual losses she has sustained, for never was there a soil so blessed by nature, or so rich in corn, wine, and oil, and in the animated industry of its inhabitants. France is at present the fabled giant, struggling, or rather lying supine, under the load of mountains which have been precipitated on her; but she is not, and cannot be crushed. Remove the incumbent weight of 600,000 or 700,000 foreigners, and she will soon stand upright—happy, if experience shall have taught her to be contented to exert her natural strength only for her own protection, and not for the annoyance of her neighbours. I am cut short in my lucubrations, by an opportunity to send this letter with Lord Castlereagh's despatches; which is of less consequence, as I will endeavour to see you in passing through London. I leave this city for Dieppe on Saturday, but I intend to go round by Harfleur, if possible. Ever your truly obliged and affectionate

WALTER SCOTT."

"Paul" modestly acknowledges, in his last letter, the personal attentions which he received while in Paris, from Lords Cathcart, Aberdeen, and Castlereagh; and hints that, through their intervention, he had witnessed several of the splendid *fêtes* given by the Duke of Wellington, where he saw half the crowned heads of Europe grouped among the gallant soldiers who had cut a way for them to the guilty capital of France. Scott's reception, however, had been distinguished to a degree of which Paul's language gives no notion. The noble lords above-named welcomed him with cordial satisfaction; and the Duke of Wellington, to whom he was first presented by Sir John Malcolm, treated him then, and ever afterwards, with a kindness and confidence, which, I have often heard him say, he considered as "the highest distinction of his life." He used to tell, with great effect, the circumstances of his introduction to the Emperor Alexander, at a dinner given by the Earl of Cathcart. Scott appeared, on that occasion, in the blue and red dress of the Selkirkshire Lieutenancy; and the Czar's first question, glancing at his lameness, was, "In what affair were you wounded?" Scott signified that he suffered from a natural infirmity; upon which the Emperor said, "I thought Lord Cathcart mentioned that you had served." Scott observed that the

Earl looked a little embarrassed at this, and promptly answered, "O, yes; in a certain sense I have served—that is, in the yeomanry cavalry; a home force resembling the Landwehr, or Landsturm."—"Under what commander?"—"Sous M. le Chevalier Rae."—"Were you ever engaged?"—"In some slight actions—such as the battle of the Cross Causeway and the affair of Moredun-Mill."—"This," says Mr. Pringle of Whytbank, "was, as he saw in Lord Cathcart's face, quite sufficient, so he managed to turn the conversation to some other subject." It was at the same dinner that he first met Platoff,* who seemed to take a great fancy to him, though, adds my friend, "I really don't think they had any common language to converse in." Next day, however, when Pringle and Scott were walking together in the Rue de la Paix, the Hetman happened to come up, cantering with some of his Cossacks; as soon as he saw Scott, he jumped off his horse, leaving it to the Pulk, and, running up to him, kissed him on each side of the cheek with extraordinary demonstrations of affection—and then made him understand, through an aid-de-camp, that he wished him to join his staff at the next great review, when he would take care to mount him on the gentlest of his Ukraine horses. So mounted, accordingly, he witnessed the great closing *spectacle* on the *Champ de Mars.*

It will seem less surprising that Scott should have been honoured with much attention by the leading soldiers and statesmen of Germany then in Paris. The fame of his poetry had already been established for some years in that country. Yet it may be doubted whether Blücher had heard of Marmion any more than Platoff; and old Blücher struck Scott's fellow-travellers as taking more interest in him than any foreign general, except only the Hetman.

A striking passage in Paul's tenth letter indicates the high notion which Scott had formed of the personal qualities of the Prince of Orange. After depicting, with almost prophetic accuracy, the dangers to which the then recent union of Holland and Belgium must be exposed, he concludes with expressing his hope that the firmness and sagacity of the King of the Netherlands, and the admiration which his heir's character and bearing had already excited among all, even Belgian observers, might ultimately prove effective in redeeming this difficult experiment from the usual failure of "*arrondissements*, indemnities, and all the other terms of modern date, under sanction of which cities and districts, and even kingdoms, have been passed from one government to another, as the property of lands or stock is transferred by a bargain between private parties."

It is not less curious to compare, with the subsequent course of affairs in France, the following brief hint in Paul's 16th letter:—"The general rallying point of the *Liberalistes* is an avowed dislike to the present monarch and his immediate connexions. They will sacrifice, they pretend, so much to the general inclinations of Europe as to select a king from the Bourbon race; but he must be one of their own choosing, and the Duke of Orleans is most familiar in their mouths." Thus, in its very bud, had his eye detected the *conjuration de quinze ans!*

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* Scott acknowledges, in a note to St. Ronan's Well (vol. i., p. 252), that he took from Platoff this portrait of Mr. Touchwood:—"His face, which at the distance of a yard or two seemed hale and smooth, appeared, when closely examined, to be seamed with a million of wrinkles, crossing each other in every direction possible, but as fine as if drawn by the point of a very fine needle." Thus did every little peculiarity remain treasured in his memory, to be used in due time for giving the air of minute reality to some imaginary personage.

Among the gay parties of this festive period, Scott mentioned with special pleasure one fine day given to an excursion to Ermenonville, under the auspices of Lady Castlereagh. The company was a large one, including most of the distinguished personages whom I have been naming, and they dined *al fresco* among the scenes of Rousseau's retirement, but in a fashion less accordant with the spirit of his *rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire*, than with the song which commemorates some earlier tenants of that delicious valley—

"La belle Gabrielle
  Etoit dans ces lieux—
Et le souvenir d'elle
  Nous rend heureux," &c.

At some stage of this merry day's proceedings, the ladies got tired of walking, and one of Lord Castlereagh's young diplomatists was despatched into a village in quest of donkeys for their accommodation. The *attaché* returned by-and-bye with a face of disappointment, complaining that the charge the people made was so extravagant, he could not think of yielding to the extortion. "*Marshal Forwards*" said nothing, but nodded to an aid-de-camp. They had passed a Prussian piquet a little while before;—three times the requisite number of donkeys appeared presently, driven before half a dozen hussars, who were followed by the screaming population of the refractory hamlet; and "an angry man was Blücher," said Scott, "when Lord Castlereagh condescended to go among them, all smiles, and sent them back with more Napoleons than perhaps the fee-simple of the whole stud was worth."

Another evening of more peaceful enjoyment has left a better record. But I need not quote here the "Lines on St. Cloud."* They were sent, on the 16th of August, to the late Lady Alvanley, with whom and her daughters he spent much of his time while in Paris.

As yet, the literary reputation of Scott had made but little way among the French nation; but some few of their eminent men vied even with the enthusiastic Germans in their courteous and unwearied attentions to him. The venerable *Chevalier*, in particular, seemed anxious to embrace every opportunity of acting as his Cicerone; and many mornings were spent in exploring, under his guidance, the most remarkable scenes and objects of historical and antiquarian interest both in Paris and its neighbourhood. He several times also entertained Scott and his young companions at dinner; but the last of those dinners was thoroughly poisoned by a preliminary circumstance. The poet, on entering the saloon, was presented to a stranger, whose physiognomy struck him as the most hideous he had ever seen; nor was his disgust lessened, when he found, a few minutes afterwards, that he had undergone the *accollade* of David "of the blood-stained brush."

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* See Poetical Works, vol. xi. p. 295.

From Paris, Mr. Bruce and Mr. Pringle went on to Switzerland, leaving the poet and Gala to return home together, which they did by way of Dieppe, Brighton, and London. It was here, on the 14th of September, that Scott had that last meeting with Lord Byron, alluded to in his communication to Mr. Moore, already quoted. He carried his young friend in the morning to call on Lord Byron, who agreed to dine with them at their hotel, where he met also Charles Mathews and Daniel Terry. The only survivor of the party has recorded it in his note-book as the most interesting day he ever spent. "How I did stare," he says, "at Byron's beautiful pale face, like a spirit's—good or evil. But he was *bitter*—what a contrast to Scott! Among other anecdotes of British prowess and spirit, Scott mentioned that a young gentleman —— —— —— had been awfully shot in the head while conveying an order from the Duke, and yet staggered on, and delivered his message when at the point of death. 'Ha!' said Byron, 'I daresay he could do as well as most people without his head—it was never of much use to him.' Waterloo did not delight him, probably—and Scott could talk or think of scarcely any thing else."

Mathews accompanied them as far as Warwick and Kenilworth, both of which castles the poet had seen before, but now re-examined with particular curiosity. They spent a night on this occasion at Birmingham; and early next morning Scott sallied forth to provide himself with a planter's knife of the most complex contrivance and finished workmanship. Having secured one to his mind, and which for many years after was his constant pocket-companion, he wrote his name on a card, "Walter Scott, Abbotsford," and directed it to be engraved on the handle. On his mentioning this acquisition at breakfast, young Gala expressed his desire to equip himself in like fashion, and was directed to the shop accordingly. When he had purchased a similar knife, and produced his name in turn for the engraver, the master cutler eyed the signature for a moment, and exclaimed—"John Scott of Gala! Well, I hope your ticket may serve me in as good stead as another Mr. Scott's has just done. Upon my word, one of my best men, an honest fellow from the North, went out of his senses when he saw it—he offered me a week's work if I would let him keep it to himself—and I took *Saunders* at his word." Scott used to talk of this as one of the most gratifying compliments he ever received in his literary capacity.

Their next halt was at Rokeby; but since Scott had heard from thence, Mrs. Morritt's illness had made such alarming progress, that the travellers regretted having obtruded themselves on the scene of affliction, and resumed their journey early next morning.

Reaching Abbotsford, Scott found with his family his old friend Mr. Skene of Rubislaw, who had expected him to come home sooner, and James Ballantyne, who had arrived with a copious budget of bills, calendars, booksellers' letters, and proof-sheets. From each of these visiters' *memoranda* I now extract an anecdote. Mr. Skene's is of a small enough matter, but still it places the man so completely before myself, that I am glad he thought it worth setting down.

"During Scott's absence," says his friend, "his wife had had the tiny drawing-room of the cottage fitted up with new chintz furniture—every thing had been set out in the best style—and she and her girls had been looking forward to the pleasure which they supposed the little surprise of the arrangements would give him. He was received in the spruce fresh room, set himself comfortably down in the chair prepared for him, and remained in the full enjoyment of his own fireside, and a return to his family circle, without the least consciousness that any change had taken place—until, at length, Mrs. Scott's patience could hold out no longer, and his attention was expressly called to it. The vexation he showed at having caused such a disappointment, struck me as amiably characteristic—and in the course of the evening, he every now and then threw out some word of admiration, to reconsole *mamma.*"

Ballantyne's note of their next morning's conference is in these terms. "He had just been reviewing a pageant of emperors and kings, which seemed, like another Field of the Cloth of Gold, to have been got up to realize before his eyes some of his own splendid descriptions. I begged him to tell me what was the general impression left on his mind. He answered, that he might now say he had seen and conversed with all classes of society, from the palace to the cottage, and including every conceivable shade of science and ignorance—but that he had never felt awed or abashed except in the presence of one man—the Duke of Wellington. I expressed some surprise. He said I ought not, for that the Duke of Wellington possessed every one mighty quality of the mind in a higher degree than any other man did, or had ever done. He said he beheld in him a great soldier and a great statesman—the greatest of each. When it was suggested that the Duke, on his part, saw before him a great poet and novelist, he smiled, and said, 'What would the Duke of Wellington think of a few *bits of novels,* which perhaps he had never read, and for which the strong probability is that he would not care a sixpence if he had?' You are not" (adds Ballantyne) "to suppose that he looked either sheepish or embarrassed in the presence of the Duke—indeed you well know that he did not, and could not do so; but the feeling, qualified and modified as I have described it, unquestionably did exist to a certain extent. Its origin forms a curious moral problem; and may probably be traced to a secret consciousness, which he might not himself advert to, that the Duke, however great as a soldier and statesman, was so defective in imagination as to be incapable of appreciating that which had formed the charm of his own life, as well as of his works."

It is proper to add to Mr. Ballantyne's solution of his "curious moral problem," that he was, in his latter days, a strenuous opponent of the Duke of Wellington's politics; to which circumstance he ascribes, in these same *memoranda,* the only coolness that ever occurred between him and Scott. I need hardly repeat, what has been already distinctly stated more than once, that Scott never considered any amount of literary distinction as entitled to be spoken of in the same breath with mastery in the higher departments of practical life—least of all, with the glory of a first-rate captain. To have done things worthy to be written, was in his eyes a dignity to which no man made any approach, who had only written things worthy to be read. He on two occasions, which I can never forget, betrayed painful uneasiness when his works were alluded to as reflecting honour on the age that had produced Watt's improvement of the steam-engine, and the safety-lamp of Sir Humphry Davy. Such was his modest creed—but from all I ever saw or heard of his intercourse with the Duke of Wellington, I am not disposed to believe that he partook it with the only man in whose presence he ever felt awe and abashment.*

A charming page in Mr. Washington Irving's "Abbotsford and Newstead," affords us another anecdote connected with this return from Paris. Two years after this time, when the amiable American visited Scott, he walked with him to a quarry, where his people were at work. "The face of the humblest dependant" (he says) "brightened at his approach—all paused from their labour, to have a pleasant 'crack wi' the laird.' Among the rest was a tall straight old fellow, with a healthful complexion and silver hairs, and a small round-crowned white hat. He had been about to shoulder a hod, but paused, and stood looking at Scott with a slight sparkling of his blue eye, as if waiting his turn; for the old fellow knew he was a favourite. Scott accosted him in an affable tone, and asked for a pinch of snuff. The old man drew forth a horn snuff-box. 'Hoot, man,' said Scott, 'not that old mull. Where's the bonnie French one that I brought you from Paris?' 'Troth, your honour,' replied the old fellow, 'sic a mull as that is nae for week-days.' On leaving the quarry, Scott informed me, that, when absent at Paris, he had purchased several trifling articles as presents for his dependants, and, among others, the gay snuff-box in question, which was so carefully reserved for Sundays by the veteran. 'It was not so much the value of the gifts,' said he, 'that pleased them, as the idea that the laird should think of them when so far away.'"

One more incident of this return—it was told to me by himself, some years afterwards, with gravity, and even sadness. "The last of my chargers," he said, "was a high-spirited and very handsome one, by name Daisy, all over white, without a speck, and with such a mane as Reubens delighted to paint. He had, among other good qualities, one always particularly valuable in my case, that of standing like a rock to be mounted. When he was brought to the door, after I came home from the Continent, instead of signifying, by the usual tokens, that he was pleased to see his master, he looked askant at me like a devil; and when I put my foot in the stirrup, he reared bolt upright, and I fell to the ground rather awkwardly. The experiment was repeated twice or thrice, always with the same result. It occurred to me that he might have taken some capricious dislike to my dress; and Tom Purdie, who always falls heir to the white hat and green jacket, and so forth, when Mrs. Scott has made me discard a set of garments, was sent for, to try whether these habiliments would produce him a similar reception from his old friend Daisy: but Daisy allowed Tom to back him with all manner of gentleness. The thing was inexplicable—but he had certainly taken some part of my conduct in high dudgeon and disgust; and after trying him again, at the interval of a week, I was obliged to part with Daisy—and wars and rumours of wars being over, I resolved thenceforth to have done with such dainty blood. I now stick to a good sober cob." Somebody suggested, that Daisy might have considered himself as ill-used, by being left at home when *the Laird* went on his journey. "Ay," said he, "these creatures have many thoughts of their own, no doubt, that we can never penetrate." Then, laughing, "Troth," said he, "maybe some bird had whispered Daisy that I had been to see the grand reviews at Paris on a little scrag of a Cossack, while my own gallant trooper was left behind bearing Peter and the post-bag to Melrose."

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* I think it very probable that Scott had his own first interview with the Duke of Wellington in his mind when he described the introduction of Ronald Graham to the Regent Murray, in the novel of The Abbot:—" Such was the personage before whom Roland Graham now presented himself with a feeling of breathless awe, very different from the usual boldness and vivacity of his temper. In fact he was, from education and nature, much more easily controlled by the moral superiority arising from the elevated talents and renown of those with whom he conversed, than by pretensions founded only on rank or external show. He might have braved with indifference the presence of an Earl merely distinguished by his belt and coronet: but he felt overawed in that of the eminent soldier and statesman, the wielder of a nation's power, and the leader of her armies."—*Waverley Novels*, vol. xx., p. 292.

A few letters, written shortly after his return to Abbotsford, will, among other things, show with what zeal he at once resumed his literary industry, if indeed that can be said to have been at all interrupted by a journey, in the course of which a great part of Paul's narrative, and also of the poem of "the Field of Waterloo," must have been composed.

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. M. P. Rokeby Park.

"Abbotsford, 2d Oct. 1815.

"My dear Morritt,

"Few things could have given me more real pain, than to see Mrs. Morritt under such severe suffering, and the misery you sustain in witnessing it. Yet let us trust in the goodness of Providence, which restored the health so deservedly dear to you from as great a state of depression upon a former occasion. Our visit was indeed a melancholy one, and, I fear, added to your distress, when, God knows, it required no addition. The contrast of this quiet bird's nest of a place, with the late scene of confusion and military splendour which I have witnessed, is something of a stunning nature, and, for the last five or six days, I have been content to fold my hands, and saunter up and down in a sort of indolent and stupified tranquillity, my only attempt at occupation having gone no farther than pruning a young tree now and then. Yesterday, however, and to-day, I began, from necessity, to prune verses, and have been correcting proofs of my little attempt at a poem on Waterloo. It will be out this week, and you shall have a copy by the Carlisle coach, which pray judge favourably, and remember it is not always the grandest actions which are best adapted for the arts of poetry and painting. I believe I shall give offence to my old friends the Whigs, by not condoling with Buonaparte. Since his sentence of transportation, he has begun to look wonderfully comely in their eyes. I would they had hanged him, that he might have died a perfect Adonis. Every reasonable creature must think the Ministers would have deserved the cord themselves, if they had left him in a condition again to cost us the loss of 10,000 of our best and bravest, besides thirty millions of good money. The very threats and frights which he has given the well-meaning people of this realm (myself included), deserved no less a punishment than banishment, since the 'putting in bodily fear' makes so material a part of every criminal indictment. But, no doubt, we shall see Ministers attacked for their want of generosity to a fallen enemy, by the same party who last year, with better grounds, assailed them for having left him in a situation again to disturb the tranquillity of Europe. My young friend Gala has left me, after a short visit to Abbotsford. He is my nearest (conversable) neighbour, and I promise myself much comfort in him, as he has a turn both for the sciences and for the arts, rather uncommon among our young Scotch lairds. He was delighted with Rokeby and its lord, though he saw both at so melancholy a period, and endured, not only with good-humour but with sympathy, the stupidity of his fellow-traveller, who was not by any means *dans son brillant* for some time after leaving you.

"We visited Corby Castle on our return to Scotland, which remains, in point of situation, as beautiful as when its walks were celebrated by David Hume, in the only rhymes he was ever known to be guilty of. Here they are, from a pane of glass in an inn at Carlisle:—

> 'Here chicks in eggs for breakfast sprawl,
> Here godless boys God's glories squall,
> Here Scotchmen's heads do guard the wall,
> But Corby's walks atone for all.'

Would it not be a good quiz to advertise *The Poetical Works of David Hume*, with notes, critical, historical, and so forth—with an historical enquiry into the use of eggs for breakfast, a physical discussion on the causes of their being addled; a history of the English church music, and of the choir of Carlisle in particular; a full account of the affair of 1745, with the trials, last speeches, and so forth, of the poor *plaids* who were strapped up at Carlisle; and, lastly, a full and particular description of Corby, with the genealogy of every family who ever possessed it? I think, even without more than the usual waste of margin, the Poems of David would make a decent twelve shilling touch. I shall think about it, when I have exhausted mine own *century of inventions*.

"N. P. I do not know whether it is perverseness of taste, or old associations, but an excellent and very handsome modern house, which Mr. Howard has lately built at Corby, does not, in my mind, assimilate so well with the scenery as the old irregular monastic hall, with its weatherbeaten and antique appearance, which I remember there some years ago.

"Out of my Field of Waterloo has sprung an odd wild sort of thing, which I intend to finish separately, and call it the Dance of Death.[*] These matters take up my time so much, that I must bid you adieu for the present. Besides, I am summoned to attend a grand *chasse*, and I see the children are all mounted upon the ponies. By the way, Walter promises to be a gallant horseman. Ever most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

I shall close this chapter with a transcript of some *Notes* on the proof-sheets of the "Field of Waterloo." John Ballantyne being at Abbotsford on the 3d of October, his brother the printer addressed the packet containing the sheets to him. John appears to have considered James's observations on the margin before Scott saw them; and the record of the style in which the Poet repelled, or yielded to, his critics, will at all events illustrate his habitual good-nature.

John Ballantyne writes on the fly-leaf of the proofs to his confidential clerk:—"Mr. Hodgson, I beg these sheets and all the MS. may be carefully preserved just as they stand, and put in my father's desk. J. B."

James prefaces his animadversions with this quotation:—

"Cut deep and spare not.—*Penruddock*."

The *Notes* are these:—

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[*] This was published in the Edinburgh Annual Register in 1815.—See Poetical Works, Ed. 1834, vol. xi. p. 297.

STANZA I.—" Fair Brussels, thou art far behind."

James Ballantyne.—I do not like this line. It is tame, and the phrase " far behind," has, to my feeling, some associated vulgarity.

Scott.—Stet.

STANZA II.—" Let not *the* stranger with disdain
The architecture view."

James.—These two words are cacophonous. Would not *its* do?

Scott.—Th. is a bad sound. Ts. a much worse. Read *their*.

STANZA IV.—" A stranger might reply."

James.—My objection to this is probably fantastical, and I state it only, because from the first moment to the last, it has always made me boggle. I don't like *a stranger*—Query, " The questioned"—The " spectator"—" gazer," &c.

Scott.—*Stranger* is appropriate—it means stranger to the circumstances.

STANZA VI.—*James.*—You had changed " garner-house profound," which I think quite admirable, to " garner under ground," which I think quite otherways. I have presumed not to make the change—must I?

Scott.—I acquiesce, but with doubts; *profound* sounds affected.

STANZA VIII.—" The deadly tug of war at length
Must limits find in human strength,
And *cease* when these are passed,
Vain hope! &c."

James.—I must needs repeat, that the deadly tug *did* cease in the case supposed. It lasted long, very long; but, when the limits of resistance, of human strength were past—that is, after they had fought for ten hours, then the deadly tug *did* cease. Therefore the " hope" was not " vain."

Scott.—I answer it did *not*,—because the observation relates to the strength of those actually engaged, and when *their* strength was exhausted other squadrons were brought up. Suppose you saw two lawyers scolding at the bar, you might say this must have an end—human lungs cannot hold out—but, if the debate were continued by the senior counsel, your well-grounded expectations would be disappointed—" Cousin, thou wert not wont to be so dull!"—

IBID.—" Nor ceased the *intermitted* shot."

James.—Mr. Erskine contends that " intermitted" is redundant.

Scott.—" Nor ceased the *storm of shell and shot.*"

STANZA X.—" ——Never shall our country say
We gave one inch of ground away,
When battling for her right."

James.—*In conflict?*

John B.—*Warring?* I am afraid *battling* must stand.

Scott.—All worse than the text.

STANZA XI.—" Peal'd wildly the imperial name."

James.—I submit with diffidence whether this be not a somewhat tame conclusion to so very animated a stanza? And, at any rate, you will observe, that as it stands, you have no rhyme whatever to " The Cohort eagles *fly*."—You have no rhyme to *fly*. *Flew* and *fly*, also, are perhaps too near, considering that each word closes a line of the same sort. I don't well like " *Thus* in a torrent," either. If it were, " In one broad torrent," &c., it strikes me that it would be more spirited.

Scott.—Granted as to most of these observations—Read, " In one *dark* torrent broad and strong," &c.—The " imperial name" is *true*, therefore must stand.

STANZA XII.—" Nor was one forward footstep *stopped*."

James.—This staggering word was intended, I presume, but I don't like it.

Scott.—Granted. Read *staid*, &c.

Ibid.—" Down were the eagle banners sent,
Down, down the horse and horsemen went."

James.—This is very spirited and very fine; but it is unquestionably liable to the charge of being very nearly a direct repetition of yourself. See Lord of the Isles, Canto vi. St. 24.

" *Down! down!* in headlong overthrow,
Horseman and horse, the foremost go," &c.

This passage is at once so striking and so recent, that its close similarity to the present, if not indeed its identity, must strike every reader; and really, to borrow from one's self, is hardly much better than to borrow from one's neighbours. And yet again, a few lines lower:—

" As hammers on the *anvils* reel,
Against the cuirass *clangs* the steel."

See Lady of the Lake, Canto VI., Stanza 18:—

" I heard the broadswords' deadly *clang*
As if an hundred *anvils* rang."

Here is precisely the same image, in very nearly the same words.

Scott.—I have altered the expression, but made a note, which, I think, will vindicate my retaining the simile.

Stanza. XIII.—" As their own Ocean-rocks hold *stance*."

John.—I do not know such an English word as *stance*.

Scott.—Then we'll make it one for the *nance*.

Ibid.—" And *newer* standards fly."

James.—I don't like *newer*.

Scott.—" And *other* standards fly."

Ibid.—" Or can thy memory fail to *quote*,
Heard to thy cost the vengeful note."

James.—Would to God you would alter this *quote!*

John.—Would to God *I* could!—I certainly should.—

Scott.—" Or can thy memory fail to know,
Heard oft before in hour of woe."

Or,

" Or dwells not in thy memory still,
Heard frequent in thine hour of ill."

Stanza XV.—" Wrung forth by pride, *regret*, and shame."

James.—I have ventured to submit to your choice—

" Wrung forth by pride, *and rage*, and shame."

Regret appearing a faint epithet amidst such a combination of bitter feelings.

Scott.—Granted.

Ibid.—" So mingle banner, wain, and gun,
Where in one tide of horror run
The warriors," &c.

James.—In the first place, warriors *running* in a tide, is a clashing metaphor; in the second, the warriors *running* at all is a little homely. It is true, no doubt; but really running is little better than scampering. For these causes, one or both, I think the lines should be altered.

Scott.—You are wrong in one respect. A tide is always said to *run*,—but I thought of the tide without attending to the equivoque, which must be altered. Read,—

" Where the tumultuous flight rolls on."

STANZA XVI.—"—— found *gallant* grave."

James.—This is surely a singular epithet to a grave. I think the whole of this stanza eminently fine; and, in particular, the conclusion.

Scott.— ——" found *soldier's* grave."——

STANZA XXI.—" *Redoubted* Picton's soul of fire."

James.—From long association, this epithet strikes me as conveying a semi-ludicrous idea.

Scott.—It is here appropriate, and your objection seems merely personal to your own association.

IBID.—" Through his friend's heart to *wound* his own."

James.—Quære—*Pierce*, or rather *stab*—*wound* is faint.

Scott.— ——" Pierce."——

STANZA XXI.—" Forgive, *brave fallen*, the imperfect lay."

James.—Don't like " brave fallen " at all; nor " appropriate praise," three lines after. The latter in particular is prosaic.

Scott.—Forgive, *brave dead.*
——" *The dear-earned praise.*"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

POEM OF THE FIELD OF WATERLOO PUBLISHED—REVISION OF PAUL'S LETTERS, ETC.—QUARREL AND RECONCILIATION WITH HOGG—FOOTBALL MATCH AT CATERHAUGH—SONGS ON THE BANNER OF BUCCLEUCH—DINNER AT BOWHILL—DESIGN FOR A PIECE OF PLATE TO THE SUTORS OF SELKIRK—LETTERS TO THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—JOANNA BAILLIE—AND MR. MORRITT.—1815.

THE poem of " the Field of Waterloo " was published before the end of October; the profits of the first edition being the author's contribution to the fund raised for the relief of the widows and children of the soldiers slain in the battle. This piece appears to have disappointed those most disposed to sympathize with the author's views and feelings. The descent is indeed heavy from his Bannockburn to his Waterloo: the presence, or all but visible reality of what his dreams cherished, seems to have overawed his imagination, and tamed it into a weak pomposity of movement. The burst of pure native enthusiasm upon the *Scottish* heroes that fell around the Duke of Wellington's person, bears, however, the broadest marks of " the Mighty Minstrel."—

——" Saw gallant Miller's fading eye
Still bent where Albyn's standards fly,
And Cameron, in the shock of steel,
Die like the offspring of Lochiel," &c.;—

and this is far from being the only redeeming passage. There is one, indeed, in which he illustrates what he then thought Buonaparte's poorness of spirit in adversity, which always struck me as pre-eminently characteristic of Scott's manner of interweaving, both in prose and verse, the moral energies with analogous natural description, and combining thought with imagery—

"Or is thy soul like mountain tide,
That, swelled by winter storm and shower,
Rolls down in turbulence of power,
A torrent fierce and wide;
Reft of these aids, a rill obscure,
Shrinking unnoticed, mean and poor,
Whose channel shows displayed
The wrecks of its impetuous course,
But not one symptom of the force
By which those wrecks were made!"

The poem was the first upon a subject likely to be sufficiently hackneyed; and, having the advantage of coming out in a small cheap form—(prudently imitated from Murray's innovation with the tales of Byron, which was the death-blow to the system of verse in quarto) —it attained rapidly a measure of circulation above what had been reached either by Rokeby or the Lord of the Isles.

Meanwhile, the revision of Paul's Letters was proceeding; and Scott had, almost immediately on his return to Abbotsford, concluded his bargain for the first edition of a third novel—The Antiquary—to be published also in the approaching winter. Harold the Dauntless, too, was from time to time taken up as the amusement of *horæ subsecivæ*. As for Scott's out of doors occupations of that autumn, sufficient light will be thrown on them by the following letter; from which it is seen that he had now completed a rather tedious negotiation with another bonnet-laird, and definitively added the lands of *Kaeside* to the original estate of Abbotsford.

To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.

"November 12, 1815, Abbotsford.

"I have been long in acknowledging your letter, my dear friend, and yet you have not only been frequent in my thoughts, as must always be the case, but your name has been of late familiar in my mouth as a household word. You must know that the pinasters you had the goodness to send me some time since, which are now fit to be set out of the nursery, have occupied my mind as to the mode of disposing of them. Now, mark the event; there is in the middle of what will soon be a bank of fine young wood, a certain old gravel-pit, which is the present scene of my operations. I have caused it to be covered with better earth, and gently altered with the spade, so as, if possible, to give it the air of one of those accidental hollows which the surface of a hill frequently presents. Having arranged my ground, I intend to plant it all round with the pinasters, and other varieties of the pine species, and in the interior I will have a rustic seat, surrounded by all kinds of evergreen shrubs (laurels in particular), and all varieties of the holly and cedar, and so forth, and this is to be called and entitled *Joanna's Bower*. We are determined in the choice of our ornaments by necessity, for our ground fronts (in poetic phrase) the rising sun, or, in common language, looks to the east; and being also on the north side of the hill—(don't you shiver at the thought?)—why, to say truth, George Wynnos and I are both of opinion that nothing but evergreens will flourish there; but I trust I shall convert a present deformity into a very pretty little hobbyhorsical sort of thing. It will not bear looking at for years, and that is a pity: but it will so far resemble the person from whom it takes name, that it is planted, as she has written, for the benefit as well of posterity as for the passing generation. Time and I, says the Spaniard, against any two; and, fully confiding in the proverb, I have just undertaken another grand task. You must know, I have purchased a large lump of wild land, lying adjoining to this little property, which greatly more than doubles my domains. The land is said to be reasonably bought, and I am certain I can turn it to advantage by a little judicious expenditure; for this place is already allowed to be worth twice what it cost me; and our people here think so little of planting, and do it so carelessly, that they stare with astonishment at the alteration which well planted woods make on the face of a country. There is, besides, a very great temptation, from the land running to within a quarter of a mile of a very sweet wild sheet of water, of which (that is, one side of it) I have every chance to become proprietor: this is a poetical circumstance not to be lost sight of, and accordingly I keep it full in my view. Amid these various avocations, past, present, and to come, I have not thought much about Waterloo, only that I am truly glad you like it. I might, no doubt, have added many curious anecdotes, but I think the pamphlet long enough as it stands, and never had any design of writing copious notes.

"I do most devoutly hope Lord Byron will succeed in his proposal of bringing out one of your dramas; that he is your sincere admirer is only synonymous with his being a man of genius; and he has, I am convinced, both the power and inclination to serve the public, by availing himself of the treasures you have laid before them. Yet I long for 'some yet untasted spring,' and heartily wish you would take Lord B. into your counsels, and adjust, from your yet unpublished materials, some drama for the public. In such a case, I would, in your place, conceal my name till the issue of the adventure. It is a sickening thing to think how many angry and evil passions the mere name of admitted excellence brings into full activity. I wish you would consider this hint, and I am sure the result would be great gratification to the public, and to yourself that sort of satisfaction which arises from receiving proofs of having attained the mark at which you aimed. Of this last, indeed, you cannot doubt, if you consult only the voices of the intelligent and the accomplished; but the object of the dramatist is professedly to delight the public at large, and therefore I think you should make the experiment fairly.

"Little Sophia is much obliged by your kind and continued recollection: she is an excellent good child, sufficiently sensible, very affectionate, not without perception of character; but the gods have not made her poetical, and I hope she will never attempt to act a part which nature has not called her to. I am myself a poet, writing to a poetess, and therefore cannot be suspected of a wish to degrade a talent, to which, in whatever degree I may have possessed it, I am indebted for much happiness: but this depends only on the rare coincidence of some talent falling in with a novelty of style and diction and conduct of story, which suited the popular taste; and were my children to be better poets than me, they would not be such in general estimation, simply because the second cannot be the first, and the first (I mean in point of date) is every thing, while others are nothing, even with more intrinsic merit. I am therefore particularly anxious to store the heads of my young damsels with something better than the tags of rhymes; and I hope Sophia is old enough (young though she be) to view her little incidents of celebrity, such as they are, in the right point of view. Mrs. Scott and she are at present in Edinburgh: the rest of the children are with me in this place; my eldest boy is already a bold horseman and a fine shot, though only about fourteen years old. I assure you I was prouder of the first black cock he killed, than I have been of any thing whatever since I first killed one myself, and that is twenty years ago. This is all stupid gossip; but, as Master Corporal Nym says, 'things must be as they may;' you cannot expect grapes from thorns, or much amusement from a brain bewildered with thorn hedges at Kaeside, for such is the sonorous title of my new possession, in virtue of which I subscribe myself, ABBOTSFORD & KAESIDE."

There is now to be mentioned a little pageant of December 1815, which perhaps interested *Abbotsford and Kaeside*, not very much less than the "Field of the Cloth of Gold," as James Ballantyne calls it, of the preceding autumn. This was no other than a foot-ball match, got up under the auspices of the Duke of Buccleuch, between the men of the Vale of Yarrow and the Burghers of Selkirk, the particulars of which will be sufficiently explained by an extract from Ballantyne's newspaper, written, I can have no doubt, by the Sheriff of the Forest.

But the part taken in this solemnity by the Ettrick Shepherd reminds me of an extraordinary epistle which Scott had received from him some months before this time, and of the account given by Hogg himself, in one of his autobiographies, of the manner in which Scott's kindness terminated the alienation it refers to.

The Shepherd, being as usual in pecuniary straits, had projected a work, to be called "The Poetic Mirror," in which should appear some piece by each popular poet of the time, the whole to be edited by himself, and published for his benefit; and he addressed, accordingly, to his brother bards, a circular petition for their best assistance. Scott—like Byron and most of the other persons thus applied to—declined the proposition. The letter in which he signified his refusal has not been preserved;—indeed it is sufficiently remarkable, that of all the many letters which Hogg must have received from his distinguished contemporaries, he appears to have kept not one; but Scott's decided aversion to joint-stock adventures in authorship must have been well known ere now to Hogg—and at all events nobody can suspect that his note of refusal was meant to be an unfriendly communication. The Shepherd, however, took some phrase in high dudgeon, and penned an answer virulently insolent in spirit and in language, accusing him of base jealousy of his own superior natural genius. I am not sure whether it was on this or another occasion of the like sort, that James varied the usual formula of epistolary composition, by beginning with "Damned Sir," and ending, "Believe me, sir, yours with disgust, &c.;" but certainly the performance was such that no intercourse took place between the parties for some weeks, or perhaps months, afterwards. The letter in which Hogg at length solicits a renewal of kindliness, says nothing, it may be observed, of the circumstance which, according to his autobiography, confirmed by the recollection of two friends, whom he names in the letter itself (Mr. John Grieve and Mr. William Laidlaw), had really caused him to repent of his suspicions, and their outrageous expression. The fact was, that hearing, shortly after the receipt of the offensive epistle, that Hogg was confined to his lodgings, in an obscure alley of Edinburgh called Gabriel's Road, by a dangerous illness, Scott called on Mr. Grieve to make enquiries about him, and to offer to take on himself the expenses of the best medical attendance. He had, however, cautioned the worthy hatter that no hint of this offer must reach Hogg; and in consequence, it might perhaps be the Shepherd's feeling at the time that he should not, in addressing his life-long benefactor, betray any acquaintance with this recent interference on his behalf. There can be no doubt, however, that he obeyed the genuine dictates of his better nature when he penned this apologetic effusion:—

To Walter Scott, Esq., Castle Street.

"Gabriel's Road, February 28, 1815.

"Mr. Scott,

"I think it is great nonsense for two men who are friends at heart, and who ever must be so—indeed it is not in the nature of things that they can be otherwise—should be professed enemies.

"Mr. Grieve and Mr. Laidlaw, who were very severe on me, and to whom I was obliged to show your letter, have long ago convinced me that I mistook part of it, and that it was not me you held in such contempt, but the opinion of the public. The idea that you might mean that (though I still think the reading will bear either construction) has given me much pain; for I know I answered yours intemperately, and in a mortal rage. I meant to have enclosed yours, and begged of you to return mine, but I cannot find it, and am sure that some one to whom I have been induced to show it, has taken it away. However, as my troubles on that subject were never like to wear to an end, I could no longer resist telling you that I am extremely vexed about it. I desire not a renewal of our former intimacy, for haply, after what I have written, your family would not suffer it; but I wish it might be understood that, when we meet *by chance*, we might shake hands, and speak to one another, as old acquaintances, and likewise that we may exchange a letter occasionally, for I find there are many things which I yearn to communicate to you, and the tears rush to my eyes when I consider that I may not.

"If you allow of this, pray let me know, and if you do not, let me know. Indeed, I am anxious to hear from you, for 'as the day of trouble is with me, so shall my strength be.' To be friends *from the teeth forwards* is common enough; but it strikes me that there is something still more ludicrous in the reverse of the picture, and so to be enemies—and why should I be, *from the teeth forwards*,

Yours sincerely,

JAMES HOGG?"

Scott's reply was, as Hogg says, "a brief note, telling him to think no more of the business, and come to breakfast next morning." The misunderstanding being thus closed, they appear to have counselled and co-operated together in the most cordial fashion, in disciplining their rural allies for the muster of Carterhaugh—the Duke of Buccleuch's brother-in-law, the Earl of Home, having appointed the Shepherd his Lieutenant over the Yarrow Band, while the Sheriff took under his special cognizance the *Sutors, i. e. shoemakers*, of Selkirk—for so the burgesses of that town have for ages styled themselves, and under that denomination their warlike prowess in days of yore has been celebrated in many an old ballad, besides the well-known one which begins with

"'Tis up wi' the Sutors o' Selkirk,
And 'tis down wi' the Earl of Home!"

In order to understand all the allusions in the newspaper record of this important day, one must be familiar with the notes to the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border; but I shall not burden it with further comment here.

"FOOT-BALL MATCH.

"On Monday, 4th December, there was played, upon the extensive plain of Carterhaugh, near the junction of the Ettrick and Yarrow, the greatest match at the ball which has taken place for many years. It was held by the people of the Dale of Yarrow, against those of the parish of Selkirk; the former being brought to the field by the Right Hon. the Earl of Home, and the Gallant Sutors by their Chief Magistrate, Ebenezer Clarkson, Esq. Both sides were joined by many volunteers from other parishes; and the appearance of the various parties marching from their different glens to the place of rendezvous, with pipes playing and loud acclamations, carried back the coldest imagination to the old times when the Foresters assembled with the less peaceable purpose of invading the English territory, or defending their own. The romantic character of the scenery aided the illusion, as well as the performance of a feudal ceremony previous to commencing the games.

"His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry came upon the ground about 11 o'clock, attended by his sons, the young Earl of Dalkeith and Lord John Scott; the Countess of Home; the Ladies Ann, Charlotte, and Isabella Scott;

Lord and Lady Montagu and family; the Hon. General Sir Edward Stopford, K. B.; Sir John Riddell of Riddell; Sir Alexander Don of Newton; Mr. Elliot Lockhart, member for the county; Mr. Pringle of Whytebank, younger; Mr. Pringle of Torwoodlee; Captain Pringle, Royal Navy; Mr. Boyd of Broadmeadows and family; Mr. Chisholm of Chisholm; Major Pott of Todrig; Mr. Walter Scott, Sheriff of Selkirkshire, and family,—and many other gentlemen and ladies.—The ancient banner of the Buccleuch family, a curious and venerable relique, emblazoned with armorial bearings, and with the word "*Bellendaine*," the ancient war-cry of the clan of Scott, was then displayed, as on former occasions when the chief took the field in person, whether for the purpose of war or sport. The banner was delivered by Lady Ann Scott to Master Walter Scott, younger of Abbotsford, who attended suitably mounted and armed, and riding over the field, displaying it to the sound of the war-pipes, and amid the acclamations of the assembled spectators, who could not be fewer than 2000 in number. That this singular renewal of an ancient military custom might not want poetical celebrity, verses were distributed among the spectators, composed for the occasion by Mr. Walter Scott and the Ettrick Shepherd.—Mr. James Hogg acted as aide-de-camp to the Earl of Home in the command of the Yarrow men, and Mr. Robert Henderson of Selkirk to Mr. Clarkson, both of whom contributed not a little to the good order of the day.

"The ball was thrown up between the parties by the Duke of Buccleuch, and the first game was gained, after a severe conflict of an hour and a half duration, by the Selkirk men. The second game was still more severely contested, and after a close and stubborn struggle of more than three hours, with various fortune, and much display of strength and agility on both sides, was at length carried by the Yarrow men. The ball should then have been thrown up a third time, but considerable difficulty occurred in arranging the voluntary auxiliaries from other parishes, so as to make the match equal; and, as the day began to close, it was found impossible to bring the strife to an issue, by playing a decisive game.

"Both parties, therefore, parted with equal honours, but, before they left the ground, the Sheriff threw up his hat, and in Lord Dalkeith's name and his own, challenged the Yarrow men, on the part of the Sutors, to a match to be played upon the first convenient opportunity, with 100 picked men only on each side. The challenge was mutually accepted by Lord Home, on his own part, and for Lord John Scott, and was received with acclamation by the players on both sides. The principal gentlemen present took part with one side or other, except the Duke of Buccleuch, who remains neutral. Great play is expected, and all bets are to be paid by the losers to the poor of the winning parish. We cannot dismiss the subject without giving our highest commendation to the Earl of Home, and to Mr. Clarkson, for the attention which they showed in promoting the spirit and good order of the day. For the players themselves, it was impossible to see a finer set of active and athletic young fellows than appeared on the field. But what we chiefly admired in their conduct was, that though several hundreds in number, exceedingly keen for their respective parties, and engaged in so rough and animated a contest, they maintained the most perfect good humour, and showed how unnecessary it is to discourage manly and athletic exercises among the common people, under pretext of maintaining subordination and good order. We have only to regret, that the great concourse of spectators rendered it difficult to mention the names of the several players who distinguished themselves by feats of strength or agility; but we must not omit to record, that the first ball was *hailed* by Robert Hall, mason in *Selkirk*, and the second by George Brodie, from *Greatlaws*, upon *Aill-water*.

"The Selkirk party wore slips of fir as their mark of distinction—the Yarrow men, sprigs of heath.

"Refreshments were distributed to the players by the Duke of Buccleuch's domestics, in a booth erected for the purpose; and no persons were allowed to sell ale or spirits on the field.

"In the evening there was a dance at the Duke's hunting-seat at Bowhill, attended by the nobility and gentry who had witnessed the sport of the day; and the fascination of Gow's violin and band detained them in the dancing-room till the dawn of the winter morning."

The newspaper then gives the songs above alluded to—viz., Scott's "Lifting of the Banner:"

> "From the brown crest of Newark its summons extending,
> Our signal is waving in smoke and in flame,
> And each Forester blythe, from his mountain descending,
> Bounds light o'er the heather to join in the game;
> Then up with the Banner! let forest winds fan her!
> She has blazed over Ettrick eight ages and more;
> In sport we'll attend her, in battle defend her,
> With heart and with hand, like our Fathers before," &c.*

—and that excellent ditty by Hogg, entitled "The Ettrick Garland, to the Ancient Banner of the House of Buccleuch:"—

> "And hast thou here, like hermit grey,
> Thy mystic characters unroll'd,
> O'er peaceful revellers to play,
> Thou emblem of the days of old?
> All hail! memorial of the brave,
> The liegeman's pride, the Border's awe!
> May thy grey pennon never wave
> On sterner field than Carterhaugh!" &c.

I have no doubt the Sheriff of the Forest was a prouder man, when he saw his boy ride about Carterhaugh with the pennon of Bellenden, than when Platoff mounted himself for the imperial review of the *Champ de Mars*. It is a pity that I should have occasion to allude, before I quit a scene so characteristic of Scott, to another outbreak of Hogg's jealous humour. His Autobiography informs us, that when the more distinguished part of the company assembled on the conclusion of the sport to dine at Bowhill, he was proceeding to place himself at a particular table—but the Sheriff seized his arm, told him *that* was reserved for the nobility, and seated him at an inferior board—"between himself and the Laird of Harden"—the first gentleman of the clan Scott. "The fact is," says Hogg, "I am convinced he was sore afraid of my getting to be too great a favourite among the young ladies of Buccleuch!" Who can read this, and not be reminded of Sancho Panza and the Duchess? And, after all, he quite mistook what Scott had said to him; for certainly there was, neither on this, nor on any similar occasion at Bowhill, any *high table for the nobility*, though there was a *side-table for the children*, at which when the Shepherd of Ettrick was about to seat himself, his friend probably whispered that it was reserved for the "*little* lords and ladies, and their playmates." This blunder may seem undeserving of any explanation; but it is often in small matters that the strongest feelings are most strikingly betrayed—and this story is, in exact proportion to its silliness, indicative of the jealous feeling which mars and distorts so many of Hogg's representations of Scott's conduct and demeanour.

It appears from the account of this foot-ball match in the Edinburgh Journal, that Scott took a lead in proposing a renewal of the contest. This, however, never occurred; and that it ought not to do so, had probably occurred from the first to the Duke of Buccleuch, who is mentioned as having alone abstained from laying any bets on the final issue.

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* See Poetical Works, (Edit. 1834) vol. xi. p. 312.

When Mr. Washington Irving visited Scott two years afterwards at Abbotsford, he told his American friend that "the old feuds and local interests, and revelries and animosities of the Scotch, still slept in their ashes, and might easily be roused; their hereditary feeling for names was still great; it was not always safe to have even the game of foot-ball between villages;—the old clannish spirit was too apt to break out."*

The good Duke of Buccleuch's solitary exemption from these heats of Carterhaugh, might read a significant lesson to minor politicians of all parties on more important scenes. In pursuance of the same peace-making spirit, he appears to have been desirous of doing something gratifying to the men of the town of Selkirk, who had on this occasion taken the field against his Yarrow tenantry. His Grace consulted Scott about the design of a piece of plate to be presented to their community; and his letter on this weighty subject must not be omitted in the memoirs of a Sheriff of Selkirk:—

To his Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c., Bowhill.

"Edinburgh, Thursday.

"My dear Lord,

"I have proceeded in my commission about the cup. It will be a very handsome one. But I am still puzzled to dispose of the birse† in a becoming manner. It is a most unmanageable decoration. I tried it upright on the top of the cup; it looked like a shaving-brush, and the goblet might be intended to make the lather. Then I thought I had a brilliant idea. The arms of Selkirk are a female seated on a sarcophagus, decorated with the arms of Scotland, which will make a beautiful top to the cup. So I thought of putting the birse into the lady's other hand; but, alas! it looked so precisely like the rod of chastisement uplifted over the poor child, that I laughed at the drawing for half an hour. Next, I tried to take off the castigatory appearance, by inserting the bristles in a kind of handle; but then it looked as if the poor woman had been engaged in the capacities of housemaid and child-keeper at once, and, fatigued with her double duty, had sat down on the wine-cooler, with the broom in one hand, and the bairn in the other. At length, after some conference with Charles Sharpe, I have hit on a plan, which, I think, will look very well, if tolerably executed,—namely, to have the lady seated in due form on the top of the lid (which will look handsome and will be well taken), and to have a thistle wreathed around the sarcophagus and rising above her head, and from the top of the thistle shall proceed the birse. I will bring a drawing with me, and they shall get the cup ready in the mean time. I hope to be at Abbotsford on Monday night, to stay for a week. My cat has eat two or three birds, while regaling on the crumbs that were thrown for them. This was a breach of hospitality; but *oportet vivere*—and *micat inter omnes*—with which stolen pun, and my respectful compliments to Lord Montagu and the ladies, I am, very truly, your Grace's most faithful and obliged servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P.S.—Under another cover, which I have just received, I send the two drawings of the front and reverse of the lid of the proposed cup. Your Grace will be so good as to understand that the thistle,—the top of which is garnished with the bristle,—is entirely detached, in working, from the figure, and slips into a socket. The following lines are humbly suggested for a motto, being taken from an ancient Scottish canzonetta,—unless the Yarrow committee can find any better:—

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* Irving's Abbotsford and Newstead, 1835, p. 40.

† A *birse*, or bunch of hog's *bristles*, forms the cognizance of the Sutors. When a new burgess is admitted into their community, *the birse* passes round with the cup of welcome, and every elder brother dips it into the wine, and draws it through his mouth, before it reaches the happy neophyte, who of course pays it similar respect.

> 'The sutor ga'e the sow a kiss;
> Grumph! quo' the sow, it's a' for my birse.'"

Some weeks before the year 1815 closed, Mr. Morritt sustained the heaviest of domestic afflictions; and several letters on that sad subject had passed between Rokeby and Abbotsford, before the date of the following:—

To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M. P., Rokeby Park.

"Edinburgh, 22d Dec. 1815.

"My dear Morritt,

"While you know what satisfaction it would have given me to have seen you here, I am very sensible of the more weighty reasons which you urge for preferring to stay at Rokeby for some time. I only hope you will remember that Scotland has claims on you, whenever you shall find your own mind so far at ease as to permit you to look abroad for consolation; and if it should happen that you thought of being here about our time of vacation, I have my time then entirely at my own command, and I need not say, that as much of it as could in any manner of way contribute to your amusement, is most heartily at yours. I have myself at present the melancholy task of watching the declining health of my elder brother, Major Scott, whom, I think, you have seen.

"My literary occupation is getting through the press the Letters of Paul, of whose lucubrations I trust soon to send you a copy. As the observations of a bystander, perhaps you will find some amusement in them, especially as I had some channels of information not accessible to every one. The recess of our courts, which takes place to-morrow, for three weeks, will give me ample time to complete this job, and also the second volume of Triermain, which is nearly finished,—a strange rude story, founded partly on the ancient northern traditions respecting the Berserkers, whose peculiar habits, and fits of martial frenzy, make such a figure in the Sagas. I shall then set myself seriously to the Antiquary, of which I have only a very general sketch at present; but when once I get my pen to the paper it will walk fast enough. I am sometimes tempted to leave it alone, and try whether it will not write as well without the assistance of my head as with it. A hopeful prospect for the reader. In the meanwhile, the snow, which is now falling so fast as to make it dubious when this letter may reach Rokeby, is likely to forward these important avocations, by keeping me a constant resident in Edinburgh, in lieu of my plan of going to Abbotsford, where I had a number of schemes in hand in the way of planting and improving. I believe I told you I have made a considerable addition to my little farm, and extended my domains towards a wild lake, which I have a good prospect of acquiring also. It has a sort of legendary fame; for the persuasion of the solitary shepherds who approach its banks, is, that it is tenanted by a very large amphibious animal, called by them a water-bull, and which several of them pretend to have seen. As his dimensions greatly exceed those of an otter, I am tempted to think with Trinculo, 'This is the devil, and no monster.' But, after all, is [illegible] not strange, that as to almost all the lakes in Scotland, both Lowland and Highlands, such a tradition should prevail? and that the description popularly given uniformly corresponds with that of the hippopotamus? Is it possible, that at some remote period, that remarkable animal, like some others which have now disappeared, may have been an inhabitant of our large lakes? Certainly the vanishing of the mammoth and other animals from the face of creation, renders such a conjecture [illegible] wild than I would otherwise esteem it. It is certain we have lost the beaver, whose bones have been more than once found in our Selkirkshire bogs and marl-mosses. The remains of the wild bull are very frequently found: and I have more than one skull, with the horns of most formidable dimensions.

"About a fortnight ago, we had a great foot-ball match in Selkirkshire, when the Duke of Buccleuch raised his banner (a very curious and ancient pennon) in great form. Your friend Walter was banner-bearer, dressed like a forester of old, in green, with a green bonnet, and an eagle feather in it; and, as he was well mounted, and rode handsomely over the field, he was much admired by all his clansmen.

have thrown these trifles together, without much hope that they will afford amusement; but I know you will wish to know what I am about, and I have rifles to send to those friends who interest themselves about a trifler. My present employment is watching, from time to time, the progress of a stupid cause, in order to be ready to reduce the sentence into writing, when the court shall have decided whether Gordon of Kenmore or MacMichan of Meikleforthhead be the superior of the lands of Tarschrechan and Dalbrattie, and entitled to the feudal casualities payable forth thereof, which may amount to twopence sterling, once in half a dozen of years. Marry, sir, they make part of a freehold qualification, and the decision may wing a voter. I did not send the book you received by the Selkirk coach. I wish I could have had sense enough to send any thing which could afford you consolation. I think our friend Lady Louisa was likely to have had this attention; she has, God knows, been herself tried with affliction, and is well acquainted with the sources from which comfort can be drawn. My wife joins in kindest remembrances, as do Sophia and Walter. Ever yours affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

This letter is dated the 22d of December. On the 26th, John Ballantyne, being then at Abbotsford, writes to Messrs. Constable:—"Paul is *all* in hand;" and an envelope, addressed to James Ballantyne on the 29th, has preserved another little fragment of Scott's playful doggerell:—

"Dear James—I'm done, thank God, with the long yarns
Of the most prosy of Apostles—Paul;
And now advance, sweet Heathen of Monkbarns,
Step out, old quiz, as fast as I can scrawl."

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